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# THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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## WOOD MAGIC

*By A.E.*

Thus did the laughing king, the magic-maker,  
Draw me into the wind-glittering wood  
By an enchantment of blown boughs and lights,  
And faint and myriad flickerings within  
The many-pillared palace of leaves. The air,  
A flying girl, flame-limbed, before me runs  
Sprinkling the dark with jewels. Eyes are dizzy  
With sudden colour. O, the hyacinths!  
I fall on knees watching the laughing king  
Hide stars in wild blossoms. On moss I lie.  
My eyes are shuttered but the earth is airy,  
Dense to the body, to the spirit most clear.  
O, it was so in the golden age. Men lived  
In the bright fire, in air, in earth. They knew  
Only the being of the laughing king  
And had no name for themselves. A night  
Of many million years breaks now to dawn.  
As the numbed limb waking to life becomes  
Once more the body we knew, so the whole star  
Quickens within me. Why was the spirit numb  
In a little dust! I glow to the full orb,  
Upon its burnished uplands what shining ones,  
With what unfallen beauty, what wild innocence,  
Make visible the laughter of their king!  
By what fleet witchery of limb the inaudible  
Becomes music to the eye, joy in the heart!  
What wonder lies behind the lovely light,  
What serene darkness, from which, spirit clear,  
Voices call to me "O, come home, come home!"



## THE PATH

*By Lord Dunsany*

Where that path leads I do not know ;  
 Though if I followed long enough  
 By grassy downs when hare-bells blow  
 And thyme lies like some gorgeous stuff  
 Carried to markets far away  
 By camels through the Khyber pass ;  
 And if I went one summer's day  
 Beyond the chalk-hills' shining grass  
 And came to where the hazels reach  
 High over dells where hyacinths were,  
 And oaks are there instead of beech  
 And fox-gloves glimmer in dim air,  
 And all seems magical and old  
 And almost unaware of man,  
 And faintly from some shepherd's fold  
 Come sheep-bells like a caravan  
 From fairy-cities travelling  
 To Vallombrosa ; if I went  
 By fields with little tufts of ling  
 And bracken's growth luxuriant  
 And dipped into the chalk again,  
 Where not a frond of bracken is  
 And where from bloom to bloom for gain  
 Go by the bright fritillaries,  
 And followed still that winding way,  
 Barely a track, and by what feet  
 So worn there's nobody to say,  
 No doubt at all that I should meet  
 The ending and the reason why  
 That path so wild went rambling far

For unknown folk to travel by,  
 Some farmstead lonely as a star,  
 Perhaps some wanderer's camping ground,  
 Or else, half hidden by wild rose,  
 Some little gap my path has found  
 Meets a great road where traffic flows.  
 But how it fared beyond the hill  
 In youth I wondered years ago,  
 And I will keep this wonder still.  
 Where that path leads I do not know.

## FOG HORNS

*By Oliver Gogarty*

The fog horns sound  
 With a note so prolonged  
 That the whole air is thronged,  
 And the sound is to me,  
 In spite of its crying,  
 The most satisfying,  
 The bravest of all the brave sounds of the sea.

From the fjords of the North  
 The fogs belly forth  
 Like sails of the long ships  
 That trouble the earth.  
 They stand with loose sail  
 In the fords of the Gael :  
 From Dark Pool to White Ford the surf-light is pale.

The Chronicles say  
 That the Danes in their day  
 Took a very great prey  
 Of women from Howth.  
 They seem to imply  
 That the women were shy,  
 That the women were loath  
 To be taken from Howth.

From bushy and thrushy, sequestering Howth.  
 No mists of the Druid  
 Could halt or undo it  
 When long ships besetted  
 The warm sands wave-netted.  
 In vain might they pray  
 To be spared the invader  
 To that kind eye of grey,  
 To the Saint who regretted  
 Sea-purple Ben Edar.  
 They went to the town  
 That is sprung from the sea  
 Where the Liffey comes down  
 Where it rolls on the lea.

The fog horns sound  
 With the very same roar  
 That was sounded of yore  
 When they sounded for war.  
 As the war horns sounded  
 When men leapt ashore,  
 And raised up the stane  
 Where the long ships had grounded.  
 You hear them again  
 As they called to the Dane,  
 And the glens were astounded.  
 War horns sounded,  
 And strong men abounded  
 When Dublin was founded.

Whenever a woman of Moore Street complains,  
 With hawser of hair  
 Where the gold and browns are,  
 And under her arm  
 A sieve or a dish  
 Full of flowers or of fish,  
 I think of that ancient forgotten alarm :  
 Her horror and grief,  
 As she snatched at the leaf  
 Of green lanes sea-ended that fall to the shore.



It was all Long Ago,  
 Only now to the slow  
 Groping in of the ships  
 In the sunlight's eclipse,  
 Are the fog-horns sounded ;  
 When war-horns sounded  
 War-ships could be grounded,  
 And dynasties founded.  
 But now they crawl in  
 With a far louder din  
 Than the old horns' could be ;  
 And that's as it should be,  
 Because we put now  
 In the place of the prow  
 Of the dragon-head boats  
 A bow-sprit of notes  
 With their loud, Safety First !  
 Where blue-eyed men burst,  
 And founded a city and founded a thirst !  
 And founded far more than to-day could be found :  
 The lesser the courage, the louder the sound !

But when the Dark Linn  
 Is aloud from the Rinn  
 I think of the women the sea-kings brought in :  
 The women of Dublin, the women who mother  
 A breed that the land and the sea cannot bother.  
 In flagons that ream  
 Like my own river's stream,  
 That gold of the granite  
 Gone black in the bogs,  
 I drink to our Race  
 That will go to the dogs,  
 Unless it can trace  
 And revive the old ways  
 Of the city when only  
 The brave men could man it,  
 Unless it can hold  
 To the virtues of old  
 When women resisted

And lovers were bold ;  
 And steer through each upstart  
 Miasma that clogs  
 Its mind with the ravings  
 Of sly pedagogues ;  
 And blow its own trumpet  
 To shatter the fogs.

*Six Poems by Jesse Stuart.*

This is the night for song ; the windows shake.  
 I guess it is the wind that shakes the windows.  
 This is the night for everything—I take  
 My clothes and hang them up and get in bed.  
 There in the fireplace lie the dying cinders.  
 Dying cinders—and dreams are in my head.  
 The cat lies by the fire and sleeps a spell  
 The wind sighs by the door its sweet farewell.  
 Only the cat and I are in the room—  
 The wind is out beneath the golden moon.  
 This is the night for song : this windy night.  
 And I get up from bed before the cinders.  
 I find there are more songs the cat remembers  
 When I get up and take my pen to write.

To-night Life is so kind and good to me.  
 Clean air goes in my lungs—my blood runs warm.  
 And I go free as wind is blowing free—  
 Go free to earth, to wind, and changing skies.  
 Something there is that makes me love this life.  
 Something there is that keeps me going on.  
 I love this life—I face the little strife  
 As I move on to face the night or dawn.  
 The wind blows free tonight and I am free  
 To touch the wind as any naked tree.  
 The moon is bright above the naked hill.  
 Some stars blink out—the brightest star is still.  
 And I am free tonight as any wind,  
 To run the moonlight paths among the wind.



When I was young I never understood  
 How women were the builders of a dream—  
 Something there was—a passion in my blood  
 To dig down deep into the crust of earth  
 To dig down deep and find a living thing.  
 I did not know of life. I felt for life.  
 It was mysterious then as it is still.  
 Just think to dig for life down in the hill !  
 When I was walking in the big earth room  
 One April when the trees were white with bloom,  
 I dreamed of fruit the slender twigs would bear.  
 The apple tree was maker of a dream.  
 An apple coming through such slender stem !  
 And when my mother came I stood beside her.  
 She was the tree and I was fruit borne by her !

Rivers have come but they will never go.  
 They shall remain and flow and flow and flow.  
 And trees have come and they will always stay.  
 They grow a season through : They have their day.  
 The sky is here : a depth of windless blue ;  
 So high the mortal eye cannot see through.  
 Fat herds of yellow stars pasture the sky ;  
 Pasture the blue-sky fields ; don't ask me why !  
 The moon is here and will remain I guess ;  
 Fat yellow pumpkin filled with laziness.  
 The earth is here and it is here to stay ;  
 This precious mother ours of stone and clay.  
 And we are here but we're not here to stay.  
 Why did they ever mix this wind and clay ?

There are delights in living close the earth.  
 There is religion left among the trees.  
 There are Gods riding on white clouds at night  
 I know—for I have sat beneath the trees  
 And watched them when the bowl of night was bright.  
 I cried to them—but they were silent Gods.  
 They never answered any of my cries.  
 But they rode high among the silver hours  
 Rode high above me in the windy skies.

Though skies are something I have sought to reach  
 Since I'm a man and when I was a boy—  
 A riding with the Gods would be a joy—  
 Above these hill tops massed with oak and beech.  
 I've been a soil man dreamer since my birth.  
 This barge of man must live close to the earth.

Why can't I get beyond the cold-drab world  
 Of words—why can't I use my hands instead?  
 I sing of flower petals when they curl  
 Out in their pretty petals to the wind.  
 And I weave word-wreaths for some useless heads.  
 Why can't I get beyond these silly words—  
 Forget the tunes of all the silly birds—  
 Go back to life—live closer than I do—  
 Closer the earth—close as I used to live.  
 Why did I ever start to be a poet  
 And say so much for second-handed things  
 Where there is beauty, better brains will know it.  
 For fools will know the love of living springs  
 Out of the heart—out of the mortal brain.

## GNOME.

*By Sam Beckett.*

Spend the years of learning squandering  
 Courage for the years of wandering  
 Through the world politely turning  
 From the loutishness of learning.

# SCHOOLFELLOWS

*By Dermot Murphy*

URBAN STREET went to the window, took out the letter again, and read in the dead light—

“ O doxa, doxa, murioisi dè Broto’n—

“ You remember the lines of Euripides’ chorus, Sophia ? And you remember too the halcyon nights in our island when the glow-flies distilled their starlight in the dewy grass and the cicadas made the groves mourn our absence whilst we lay in our long tent like an Ulysses and a Calypso in the mutual bondage of our love. Then we unrolled the books hand by hand and sang the sad songs of Electra, of Hecuba and Andromache, so far from this sublunary world where envy.”

He tried the other pocket, and having brought forth and unfolded the letter, read the plainer writing by the worse light—

“ *October 20, 1905.*

“ Deer Mouldy, Impossible to-morrow night as arranged. Let me see you next Saturday at 5.30 without fail at the old Grindstone. Ures Jesse.”

Urban Street recalled the firmness in dealing with disappointments which he inherited from his mother, a disappointed woman. He thought of the bath he was going to take, saw the same two glasses in a row on the table, the goldfish which passed one another again and again without a sign of recognition. When he had taken his bath, cooling steeply from the first pint, Mr. Street dressed himself and sterilised the affective world by tearing up two packs of cards. He watched the bits burn with disappointed flame in the firegrate, then he went out to dine alone and buy two others in fear of his wife. The humble sensation of publicity in his solo restaurant, the cards, reminded him that all the events of life have been used before. All the words have been used before, all the speaking faces were hidden behind incredulous backs. He wrote in the pluperfect tense, guard against too long a transition, too sudden a beginning, and his coffee-spoon journeyed alone : He had led the Queen of Spades ; her face had been



concealed ; till his cigarette stung his fingers and his coffee chilled his gullet with taste of singed mahogany :

“ Envy had hated the thing it fed on.”

By Saturday coming he counted three qualities in Jesse Meddows good because indetachable, like the toga on a statue or the attributes of divinity : generosity, loyalty, sincerity. His shirt was odourless and cool, making him feel ostensible again, new, like a bridegroom. Remembering in the hansom that Jesse was a liar, a double-dealer and disclaimer of personal merit did not make him regret his scruple of punctuality. His arm felt newly liberated. His stiff shirt ribbed and rumbled obediently as he paid the hansom his one-and-six at the door of the Grindstone. It was his renewed contact with the sustaining fluid of life. He was always punctual with Jesse, with time to erect a curtain of cigar smoke, pretext of paper, vestibule of *apératif*, prepare the usual omelette of questions as after a voyage, before Jesse made his appearance with his “ Howdee, old boy ” ? mowing a path with his hand, twanging his usual convivial banjo prelude. For the fifth time, toneless voices, collapsed pneumatic seats, alcohol and—

“ You remember the words in Hedda Gabler, Sophia ? And you remember those halcyon nights at Monte when the glow-flies swam in your hair like moist green stars, the cicadas chattered, and the tender strain of a waltz from the mandolin and ocarina band on the yacht in the harbour made us forget the world in which envy feeds on the thing it hates.”

Jesse was 35 minutes late. His father, demi-ruined by drink before he was born, transmitted to his son an injected eye, an impermeable palate and a small ironworks which failed. His friends in the motor car trade were his own making. While he continued at 6.15 to sell secondhand cars on commission, his mediocrity, inconsequence and parade were being unveiled again in somnolent sameness to Urban Street. He came, puffing, rescued. A prospectus, 30,000 one-pound shares, came forward to explain him. Mr. Street saluted the interloping business with sham fright that was real respect. Untold mysteries of resource

lurked in Jesse, who pulled him to the Metropole talking quickly as he walked, giving no countenance to any preliminaries. The prospectus reappeared as a bedroom carpet, screwed up became the key of a bedroom door. One would have called him a serious man; no barmaid-seducer, but an adventurer to the antiseptic Monte, a clinical type. There was a still untouched idea that Jesse never emitted an idea of his own. In the 34 years since Urban Street recognised him as a leader of men by the startling onomatopœia in his vocal imitation of an express leaving Paddington he had let off no thought that was really an idea.

They chose a table near the wall.

Twice or three times in their long friendship Meddows stopped to argue the point, to adopt an asinine position of untainted optimism, implacable moderation. Remembering that Meddows was not the only man he had never hit (he could never remember hitting anybody) became to Urban's mind a confession of moral nullity. Jesse over his port would detach small, mean thoughts from his low brow, his underlined baldness, standardised like sparking-plugs. His fingers never stained the cloth, but his pencil, giving a coup-de-spanner to every invention that came out. He envied the board and shareholders in hypocrite terms as bookies congratulate, protesting that benefits were mutual. His explanations of engines geared them to blue-prints of universal philanthropy; he provisionally hid the social contrast between motives and motors as parish moralists overlook the blind, morbid certainties of human conduct while they are busy flogging the shamefaced frailties. Urban would talk, long but not big, giving to Santos-Dumont and Blériot, anybody, the praise he withheld from himself. He was a humble delegate from the corporation of the spirit. Jesse was content to hear himself listen, scorned the opinions of majorities on grounds of statistic; valued his own available clairvoyance with eyes gone dead. Next day Mr. Street would disown the man's putty compliance, seeing himself independent of Meddow's trust in the instinctive preference. Catching his reflection in the globular obsession of the goldfish, gilt tadpoles swelling to bronze carp and dwindling again, he suspected his friend of toadyism, even docility. Thirty-four years he had known the man, put up with him.

Jesse Meddows stamped, flung his arms, paraded, then played the domestic living on nature's tips which he passed on in *tête-à-*

*tête* to Urban Street, attaching chains of licentious instruction to the sand-bag, life-preserver, knuckle-duster, even revolver. He said every type had its own way of being swindled and was jealous of innovating taxes on its vigilance and credulity. "I respect a man's prejudices," he would say, "while scorning his scruples." That was Urban Street's literary version of the other's crude and more circumstantial apology.

"Howdee, Urban?" Jesse would say, improvising a casual appearance in the Grindstone. His sole genius was in his way of presenting himself.

"How are you, old boy?" Mr. Street would respond, slower but warmer. His sole hypocrisy of casualness, Jesse evoked it.

"Now, you ugly son of a bitch, what are you going to have? Name your poison." Jesse was economical in the refinements of sincerity as a housewife of butter.

"Gin and vermouth for me, you damned scoundrel."

Shoulder to shoulder they went, but Jesse always led; his habit of whooping first out of the classroom all over.

"Same here, old — face."

He never called Jesse a crook. There were shades even in sham-morbid affectation. He had never called old Jesse a lecher; only a blasted lecher, or a bloody, making the expletive bear the meaning as the Nelson column bears the conqueror, chemically producing with caustic an alkaline, joyless complicity. For he felt small, private, anaemic beliefs inside Jesse's crude envelope that were not good to be brushed by more than persiflage. For this reason again, contact with the manly decency in the core of Jesse Meddow's character, Mr. Street was always circumstantial, full of vexed discriminations, in dealing with him, honest, expansive. Jesse, responsive, claimed to be psychic, sensitive, intuitive, telepathic. Urban Street, not knowing on which side to mistrust himself, co-operating, repudiated the intellectual basis of his own affections and verbal subterfuges. Sorting afterwards his latchkey from his money, counterfeit coin from loyal currency, the key of repose and oblivion from the keys to life, he would remember his custom to go on all fours to look at the man's impotence, negligibility, nonentity. Thirty-odd years had skilled him to beware the influence of Jesse Meddows, his bad algebra, his suspect conjugations, his misleading legends about the vulnerability and initiative of the conflicting sex, his suggestions of



personal instability. Jesse always joined him as an employé, nefarious caryatid of responsibility, and parted from him as an accomplice. The cash would remind him that he had paid for the dinner and most of the drinks as usual. That was due to a fault in him, he would think, that Jesse, man of a low frustrated type, would certainly mistake for an amiable feature and part of his regular commerce with society. It was a satisfaction in itself, regularly to beat a man he ungrudgingly, remorselessly acknowledged as a man of inflamed will and abundant personality in the game, if not of life, then of good-living. Paying for dinner and cabs, pints of claret and cigars, it was his freehold of respectability.

They had no mutual friends. That was odd. But consider that the bond of their relation, essentially indecipherable as a mania for two voices, sterilised the lines of a third interlocutor, emptied his later salutation in the street of signification, changed his nod on the way to an importunity, turned out his very name to graze in the streets of dead and buried cities, Tyre, Nineveh, Carthage.

"Meet an old schoolmate of mine," Jesse Meddows would say, his air one of bringing up a disciple.

Perhaps a pair of white spats would appear next the spittoon, or a pair of check spats. Aloft might be a monocle tied to a face with wrinkles under last summer's Epsom top hat :

"Urban Street, known as Mouldy ; Mr. Rum-rum-rumble, Old Bozer to his friends, an obstacle to his juniors and manager of the Opera Bouffe, eh ? A literary man, Bo. Write you a play some time, eh ? "

"Plays ? " Mr. Rum says, old, inconceivably bright, creaking with crystals of uric acid. Insensibility added to the natural licence of age gave him all that a satyr needs of the satiric. "Plays. Got a whole dog-damned drawerful of 'em in my office. Only don't. It's not adviseable. Distinctly off, you know."

There were others ; men of apothecary manipulations, adapters of crudity, combiners of dim, legendary projects to harness a weakness in their fellow-men to an engineering scheme for raising a wind. They were well-dressed anywhere but in Bow Street and the next morning's paper, but some had only the nerves they stood up in, or had left a sleeve of every coat in the constable's hand. Old schoolfellows they were at these affluences of the actual and the mythical. But, incestuous brothers, they

never mentioned their old school to one another, time of humiliations, contrasts, perfidies without leadership, audacities robbed in advance of nobility ; Street out of delicacy or economy of imagination, divining that Jesse would prefer Winchester, Meddows through a kind of subordinate's *panache*, knowing that Urban regretted Eton.

Urban Street had his friends too, and his wife's friends, with alien interests, narrow of mind, bigoted as machinery, egoists, bridge-players, habitual theatre-comers. He once introduced a publisher to Jesse Meddows, hateful scene in Soho, rendezvous of discordant profiles ; Bulge spitefully apologetic, deaf, self-detained, Jesse full of ill-bred concessions, overflowing. Meddows, personality formed by successive absences, a Martian, fitted to no society that contained Mr. Street except Mr. Street exclusively. Mrs. Street did not like Mr. Meddows, and Urban, attentive to the parts of his wife nearest to him and furthest from Jesse at a circular dinner-table so that it was hard to distinguish Urban the lover from Street the husband, felt that Jesse did not care much for Mrs. Street. It was the usual crowd, denatured for once in their egoisms by the non-contemporaneous questions and glances of Jesse, old schoolmate with bloodshot eyes. Jesse was an individualist like himself, heart of gold. Never more gold than when he got rid of him on that occasion, patting the back he really pushed. They were individualists. Sometimes their complicated play of individuality appeared to him as a struggle of opposed temperaments ; later it would reappear as his own capitulation to a void, a loneliness. For once or twice Jesse had ventured to criticise him, revolved some obscene comparison in the vocal part of his mind that must have taken an age to rehearse, an age of festering malice, apparatus and ambushade. He went home with the idea that Meddows with his bouncing grimacing pretence of having opinions distinct from his knowledge was a vulgar incult bore. He asked as he pushed his door how the hell he had contained himself so long, put up over and over again with the insolent boulder.

Mr. Street had been a tidy, dirty child, spectacled, pale and slapped, a youth incredulous of liberty, a young man devoted, romantic, sacrificed. He was surprised to find that his first long trousers were real trousers, that the shadow of his legs was dense and uniform, that his first top hat was indistinguishable when

hung up with others. When hair appeared on his body it did not seem real hair, and for years he could not accustom himself to call the thing he shaved a beard. He began to write his stories on an attorney's paper in an attorney's office, choosing speculative sites which he occupied on an emphyteutic or building lease : Japan, West Indies, French Riviera, and proposed to the attorney's niece during the state induced by a thick succession of causes that precipitated him at all hours into the lawyer's house where he drank port after a pastoral sentry-go in Fleet Street where he drank sherry. They were married, event which sluiced Mrs. Street with relief into unrestrained stoutness, maturity and routine as into a promised paddock.

In spite of his distracted air Urban Street was always surprised to win anything, an aunt's legacy, a solicitor's niece. Friendship with the formally unfortunate, the systematically depressed was his weakness. After a year of acquaintance with Irene Peace, year seeming afterwards a period of insensibility, the weakness fell foul of him. Irene had all the accessories of charm except the art to synchronise them. She was 30 according to Balzac, slight, with tender hands and sympathetic inclinations of the head. He was surprised. He pinned several stories to her bosom, distractedly and with success, and meditated others in which he appeared as himself, virtuoso before his foreign tour. They rediscovered one another many times in the South Kensington Museum, section of archaeontology. They kissed fraternally, their arms and bodies tended to the one ulterior shore of life, while fishes, roused from the fossil torpors of 500,000,000 years in Silurian beds, yawned for evermore over the prolonged redundancies of animal history. He complained of unhappiness and headaches, misunderstandings with life, embargoes, ennui. Where boys pushed buttons to release compressed air into jiggling locomotives he explained that his wife spent a third of the year in Bournemouth, and where insects harmful to crops expiated their crimes he seemed to be left gazing at a ripe fruit about to fall ; but he knew himself a man whom the eventual finds surprised, even asleep.

In a hansom in Bayswater Irene said :

" A friend of mine says he knows you personally."

" Who ? " Urban asked without misgiving.

" Jesse Meddows. He said you were at school together."



An armed crusader might have dropped at his feet from the moon and less have shaken him. Jesse Meddows was a figure in legend until Saturday, an obscure allusive personage in the Bible : Nun, Kish, Shem, Ham — Scum. Mr. Street learned in a moment what crimes tempt people who lead double, triple lives. He was a householder molested by a ghost appertaining to the fee-simple of a neighbour's premises ; he was a dramatist called on to revise the text of a play in the middle of a first night because an actor in a leading part has arrived late in *delirium tremens*.

"I run into Meddows now and then," he remarked reminiscently. "A bit of a bounder, I find him."

"I think he is very amusing," she said.

He admitted that he often laughed at him. He laughed again, wryly. He prudently sounded the extent, vaguely the depth, of their acquaintance. So Jesse receded again, part of an intermittent past.

Mr. Street could not see Irene and Meddows together, not being subject to hallucinations, not being a social reformer. Jesse was just a poor bum, a bouncer here and there. A few nights later he sat down at seven and wrote a letter to her full of restrained passion and hope. He touched on adverse things in a strain partly legal but wholly lyrical. Life forbade, but love smiled on them ; no laws parted mates of the soul, partners of the spirit. He looked for a flower, but found only rusty chrysanthemums. At length he thought of a poppy pressed in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, red, or rather pink, smeared with black lines. He saw the word Narkē and stood thoughtful, replacing the flower as Ulysses replaced the shade of his mother Anticleia reverently among the other thin shades. He rejected also the idea of using a perfume. Even the anonymity of eau-de-Cologne raised his wife's image before his eyes. Afterwards he posted the letter with nothing inside but the MS.

He chose a pillar-box illuminated by a chemist's window so that he could see his message till the last moment. One eye filled with crimson light and the other eye with emerald he had the illusion of being visually pasteurised as he looked at syringes, rolls of antiseptic dressing, photographs of rachitic infants ; of being able to see things as they really were. Jesse Meddows was a profligate, an outsider, a swindler and a liar. Especially a liar. So a liar that you could not know on his own word whether he

was going upstairs or coming down. The time was come to drop Meddows, drop him flat. But Jesse still was the one friend to be elected for the occasion of a hotel fire or a shipwreck. Saving a pal's life was about the only thing he would do outright, or from simple good nature to promote the interests of humanity. For any other service he would arrange to pay himself. Mr. Street thought of the money Meddows owed him : something between forty-five and seventy pounds according to circumstances. For all that, a tear, prism infused with green and pink spots, was issued by human nature, endorsed by Mr. Street, placed to the credit of Jesse Meddows. Jesse was his window on the heroic, on the manly sentiment, the only plausible demonstration he had ever seen of the humanising force of a classical education. Irene, those cheeks pale without powder, those lips red without paint, reappearing as a coiffeur's chart of verification, became his window on Monte Carlo orgies of alcohol and alkaloids. He examined her image in his mind as a photograph, the eclipse of more than one of his Creole beauties, in certain lights the perihelion of the chic. He shook his head. She was his road of evasion, a prospectus of the charms of adultery.

Later, on his pillow, he admired his duplicity and realism, judiciously summed up a thousand accusations against Jesse Meddows. The verdict of his conscience that Meddows was a forfeit knave began a chapter of Shakespearean scolding. He resolved to get rid of the goldfish, and this suggested the zoological terms : shark, skunk. He ransacked the animal world for a word more corking than skunk. In vain ; for the worst term of abuse in existence, —, could not be transferred from a human being to an animal without implying that the animal had a conscience. Jesse had none. He fell asleep.

Next day, Saturday, he prepared a speech from the witness box. But fortified by breakfast he found that he did not like invective or raising of arms. As a rule he only raised his voice, but not far. Not that Urban Street never boasted or praised himself. Jesse Meddows often heard him. But among the others his voice did not carry. Unless you were Jesse you would have to put your head in his mouth. Jesse knew Urban's self-valuation so well that he seemed to be inspired by it, the same as by a Gordon-Bennett model. But while Meddows knew all about Street he knew nothing more about Meddows than his age and postal

address. Jesse's club was only a pretext, thoroughfare, mart or exchange for racing produce, whiskey and anecdotes. Better than anyone he could identify Jesse's body in the morgue, detail his exterior for detective research. But more he could not, not about a man who used his real name as an alias, his front door as a mask, his *nullibi* as an alibi. They met almost weekly for 30 years to chat, narrate, fabricate, to dine or tipple; but the scientist who was able to perceive helium in the sun and selenium in the moon years before he was able to extort the confession, under torture, of their loitering in the very cigarettes and doughnuts he consumed in his laboratory—he seemed to be the only man qualified to winnow the essential Meddows from the Meddows of chaff, lies, parades and autobiographical fictions. He tried to reconstruct a theoretical Meddows from his problematical data. He saw him in a bar near Leicester Square elbowed between an actor and a dramatic critic. He saw him sniff and deliberate his hat, heard him say :

“An old schoolfellow of mine, Urban Street, whose name may be known to you as that of a writer of rare distinction, though still comparatively obscure, said a good thing the other night. When a woman, he remarked to me, wants to do anything on her own the first thing she needs is assistance.” (*Omnes mirari.*)

The vision was false. It was not Jesse's voice, but his own. He changed the scene; saw Jesse Meddows sprawling over the zinc in some pub near Tottenham Court Road, haunt of chauffeurs and motor-experts, thumbing his waistcoat armholes, pushing his hat, shouting :

“I'll tell you another thing. A tame upstart named Street—went to school with him in fact—goggling b—— who disappears to write stories about casinos, Creoles, geishas and rot: I heard him say the other night that when a woman first——”

Here the phantom of Meddows caught the eye of the barmaid and stopped, returning the gaze with an eye impartially distributive of science. Then :

“Hullo, Maud! I didn't know you were there. Mustn't tell that one.”

“Don't mind *me*, Mr. Meddows. You know very well that I don't understand your stories.”

The phantasm, becoming more and more like Jesse, seized



the young woman's wrists, leaned towards her over the bar, pulling :

"I just loathe to think, my dear, that the most edifying and instructive parts of my narratives are lost, and the rest misunderstood, nay, misinterpreted, by people who cut the intermediate lectures. My time this evening is at my disposal. A little hygienic stroll together on Coldham Common, and I will put you in possession of the facts. What do you say ?"

False again. It was his tutor who was talking.

He did not think about Jesse during the afternoon. But walking in the Park he thought about Irene. He anticipated her answer to his letter, but he dare not open the anticipation till he had seen her read, forefinger bent on lip, his mental reconstruction of his letter to her. Wild energies courted his steps. Several times he shuddered, sign that his body was in secret colloquy with his mind, that his nervous system had surprised the secret of his heart. The letter he wrote to Irene became an oral declaration, extended now to the length of a proposal that they run away together to the Riviera. The thought that it was just the Riviera season seemed a confirmation of his project moral and stimulating. The official calendar of human migration ratified the oblivion of his last marital scruples. To-night he would write again, business-like. He would draw a hundred or so, pack, meet her at Charing Cross, and then—

And then a row of dots like a charge of buckshot. . . .

They would speed over the Channel. A moist, cold wind would sponge the heat from his face.

He dressed at five to go and dine with Jesse Meddows, pay for the rascal's dinner for the last time, booze with that blasted bum once and no more.

"Howdee, Urban ?" his banjo began. "Don't you hear those darkies callin' ?"

"How goes it, Jesse, old boy ?"

He noticed with a shock that Meddows had suddenly several gold teeth.

"Well, old —; what is it to be ?"

"A touch of the old."

"Same for me."

Jesse's new 14-carat smile, challenging : it cut as severely as if you saw an old and trusty friend deliberately passing a brass

half-sovereign. Jesse had not changed much from a boy. The tints of his face had run to extremes, the frontier of his scalp was in dispute with triumphant baldness, the old features were distributed more meagrely in the middle of a larger mug. But the process was lenient. A self consciousness that Jesse never showed on his cheek seemed to be volunteered for at the last moment by his dental matter. When he smiled it was as though a tornado traversed a homely landscape—

“Those teeth, Jesse, if you don’t mind my saying—why? What for, old chap? Are you trying to arrange your face to sell your rotten cars in Johannesburg? Why not a plain white filling?” How exhilarating were these blunt personalities, these criticisms launched in the teeth of a man you hate!

“Running repairs, my urbane one. I’m being overhauled to pass the inspection of a new owner. A new licence. Marriage licence. Not a word until after dinner. Let me tell you about a smart bit of business I pulled off scorching this afternoon. Staggering.”

Did old Jesse not confide in anybody but him? What a waste! He took his arm from around Meddow’s neck at the restaurant only so as to climb the stairs with dignity.

He ordered a dinner with *carpes-en-gelée*, *ox-tongue à la venétienne*, partridges. They opened a second bottle of port. Mr. Street found his old friend at the top of his humble form, even above it. Women came in, rushed to a special table as neurasthenic women rush to a piano. Jesse audited their business by an accountancy partly rabelasian and partly his own. Young men with iodine moustaches patted the money in their trousers pockets to reassure it before they sat down. Girls from the country came in perfumed with last summer’s pollen and road-dust, shepherded by shepherds, gaping from their idylls. When they rose to find the smokeroom Jesse tripped over a dog and recovered with the readiness of a funambulist who knows his way. The dog yelped, but it was really a muff. Mr. Meddows apologised, commended the pedigree. Mr. Street observed with admiration that the first violinist habitually stooped to fetch the high notes and lost his bow in the air, tiptoe, to scrape the low ones. It was a lesson, a lesson directly available to those people in the corner who presumed to distinguish good from evil at a first glance, which was a privilege of the Almighty.

Suddenly, gazing with homicidal intensity at a cigar pinched square, Jesse asked :

"D'you remember old —— ?"

It was a master at the old school. Jesse sketched his portrait in the air with a few profanities, raised him from his tomb, if he was ever in one.

Roused by this prodigy of memory Urban began :

"And do you remember young —— ?"

Jesse remembered him : nailed his straw hat to the boat-house door, sewed up the legs of his pants, made his life, if any, not worth living. The floodgates, as Street called them, of schooldays reminiscence were unlocked ; they renewed the convulsing sleights, articulated the diabolical plots, cursed the humiliations and blessed the revenges of tender, ruthless urchins still inside them. Four hands were to work, removing the mossy stones.

Jesse lied enormously. But so did Street. He caught himself in the act. While he was still able to catch tangible things which had a tendency to drop, in the interval between exalting his imagination and lowering the municipal barriers of a strong administrative self esteem, he saw himself and Jesse as two men who lied to one another constantly for thirty-odd years. Each had a special ego for contact with the other, inoperative elsewhere. Before he could make a note of this phenomenon (which is the wont of people who write books and magazines, as Pliny observeth somewhere, the moment they have found a hole of their own picking) he was past the use of letters and elementary things. They had a bite in the bar, another drink in the Grindstone, another bite somewhere. Jesse narrated three new episodes in the hansom. He brought two bricks into the classroom for use during the French lesson. Why two, and why bricks ? One was to hurl through the window and the other to fling on the floor. Then there was the theory initiated by the one brick that somebody smashed the window. As soon as Mr. Street grasped the reasoning he ceased to believe the conclusion. He descended on the pavement before his own door, but having declined the assistance of his legs to reach it fell. Mr. Meddows picked him up.

"Steady, Mouldy-mug," he said.

"All right, Jesse, old boy. But before you go : congratulations, old chap !"



"What for, —— face? Finding you on the pavement? Why, blast your eyes, I pass 'em by the dozen."

"What I mean to say is this. Who is the fortunate lady of your esteem, Jesse?"

"Mouldy, allow me to recall to you one of the principles of a gentleman's conduct, namely, never under any circumstances to mention a lady's name. She is a mutual acquaintance—met you once in the museum, of all places. She knew you weren't an exhibit, because you moved."

He closed the door behind him as the cab jingled away, bearing Jesse to honesty and secrecy, and found himself in the dark without support. Later he laid his hand on his candlestick and lighted the candle. Then he entered his dining-room telling himself that it was to murder the goldfish. But really it was to feed them with little things called ants' eggs which, in touch with humanity, he had begged, tried to borrow and eventually managed to steal from the aquarium in the Grindstone, aided by Jesse. The brutes, taking no notice of him, were swimming about at one in the morning. He rubbed his eyes, steadied himself, looked again. They were really at it: just swimming about. An appalling question was asked—do fish never sleep, but just swim and swim, night and day, till they croak? He sat down to think it out, sad with new vision of nature's prodigality and economy. Perhaps if he came on them at three or four, suddenly struck a light, he would find them floating on the surface like barges, fast asleep, or sunk to the bottom in a coma. He liked to think so. The face of one of the animals, the more intelligent or voracious, put him in mind of Irene. The other was like Jesse. Irene—the shark. And he had called Jesse a skunk! There seemed to be no feminine form of that devastating word. The feminine gender of skunk might be opossa: Opostle, opossa, opossum. A word was whispered in his ear. "——!" Yes; "——!" —— to go and steal a man's longest pal! Mr. Street fell asleep.

Next morning, Sunday, his housekeeper brought him two letters, two women's hands. His wife's hand, fat, beckoned him quickly to Bournemouth, Irene's pointed him slowly to the horizon. In the afternoon he obediently climbed upon the train for Bournemouth, accepting the inevitable horizon as a circumnavigator accepts the 180th meridian. It rained in Bournemouth. It was imaginable that it rained everywhere. Mrs. Street, blonde

with an absent profile, stout, low in the hips, complained against the whole month's weather. Mr. Street secretly confounded the weather, Irene, Meddows and his wife in one article of reproach. Walking by the sea in a clapping rainproof, bitten by invisible raindrops, he remembered things better forgotten. As day followed day, each day's thought brought him a bouquet of humiliations, especially concerning Jesse and Irene. Once more he saw Meddows read his best story with an eye that wanted to wander off the page, heard him pronounce it "amorous bullduggery." He heard again Irene's affected jest that he moved in the museum. Better, he thought of the things he could tell Jesse about Irene, himself and the museum, the things he could tell Irene about—but that would only be rhetoric. The sea was an agitated surface of cold, black conical blisters; the sea, which many-smiled in the time of Homer, had some time become the garbage-can, w.-c. and waste-paper basket of the world. The land, swollen in mists and monotonous, was become a congested warren and waste lot for degenerate animals and despondent plants; the sky, sole natural object that seemed to be made of anything clean—lead—was the dangerous arena prescribed for clergymen, gulls, gods and the brothers Wright. On Saturday morning he returned to London.

Being a romantic author Mr. Street was naturally sceptical about the extent of the empire of passion. Love, a word he seldom used in conversation, in real life only resumed a happy merchandise reserved for a few great and uneasy spirits who sold all they had to buy it, a faint system of aporetic turning-points, a process of disillusion as expensive and long as a world-tour. Gazing at a vast lithographic portrait of Miss Victoria Monk, her renowned vitality diffused and lost in the expansion, Mr. Street perceived that he was madly in love with Irene Peace, and he mourned to think that Fate had elected his life to enunciate once more a law experimented by Mark Antony, Abelard, Petrarch and Dante. If Irene must be gone, then Meddows must go. Then the course would be clear to choose between sacrifice and action.

Mr. Street spent Saturday afternoon dropping Mr. Meddows in different attitudes, from different altitudes. At length he sat down at the table, drew a piece of paper to him with a sweep of his left hand, unsheathed his fountain pen with a flourish of his right. He would compose a letter of dismissal to Jesse, firmly and

gently put him away, cut, rather than hew. The moment he unscrewed his pen a fat jet of ink rolled out and formed a rich lake on the paper in which a clairvoyant might read the destinies of a royal family. So Mr. Street put on his hat and coat and left the house. He walked quickly and formed the following plan. He would meet Jesse this evening, salute him, pay for his ill-bred and obscene compliments with chilling sarcasms and leave him leaning against something.

No sooner thought of than begun. He went home, took a bath, dressed with care, paid one-and-six to be landed at the Grindstone at the regular time. The lights of the old familiar grotto put him in mind with a shock that his toward encounter with his enemy was not really to be a casual one, but a double *rendezvous*. Never mind; he strutted, appeared in a hurry to be gone, held the handle of his umbrella as if the handle of a door. He answered the collegians of the bar with a sense of redoubled intimacy, stood a drink to one, shrugged his shoulders at the mention of Jesse's name. At length—

"Howdee, Urban?" The banjo broke in.

"Oh, it's you, Jesse?"

"Of course it's me, —— face. The artist by himself. Who the hell did you think it was?"

Strange; Mr. Street had prepared no answer suitable for this suggestive query.

Mr. Meddows continued some distance alone.

They drank together, went to the Metropole and dined, looked in at a music hall, reappeared at the Grindstone. There Jesse illustrated what he considered to be a trying mashie shot with an umbrella, and a lemon which hit a prosperous man in a check cap behind the ear and caused a tension, an exchange of bad compliments, an insult and a half, a feigned adjournment that was really an extenuation, and an accommodation to be effected by a comedian with ten inches of cigar intruded in what was otherwise a serious discussion. Mr. Street, his arm around his old schoolfellow's neck, assured old Jesse on his solemn word that he had chosen the one woman who, if the circumstances were different—

There were never any others.



# PILGRIMAGE, 1932

*By Padraic Colum*

## I.—TOURS.

WHILE others of my fellow countrymen were following the footprints of our patron at home, I tried to come on some of them in France. Marmontier (*Magnum Monasterium*) has caves that belonged to the original monastery which Saint Patrick visited before he returned to the place of his captivity. The grounds in which they are belong to a modern convent—a convent that has around it the remains of thirteenth-century buildings. There are byways that go steeply up to where old walls stand with wall-flowers upon them and lilacs growing beside them. The chalky rock in this district can be tunnelled into, and one sees everywhere caves that are dwellings or storehouses. Many have modern conveniences—here are caves with telephone wires going into them, and others with verandas outside. I suppose the original monastery had its foundation through Saint Martin taking possession of caves that were dwellings. I go down into one and come to a grotto dedicated to Saint Patrick and to another in which the seven companions of Saint Martin died together, which has the name of the Grotto of the Seven Sleepers. His successors bore the body of Saint Martin to the Roman town that is now Tours and raised an edifice above it. Now as we go toward it, we can easily see why, in every age, this city would be named Tours. In this level land a high building becomes noticeable; towers would be built for their conspicuousness, and the place would be named from them.

The twin towers of the Cathedral of St. Gatien stand up impressively. Tours is now a modern city and is rather aggressive about flourishing the names of radical writers as street-names, especially near the cathedral—Emile Zola and Anatole France. And as a modern city Tours is worth visiting. The long cobbled streets have plenty of character; there are, as in all French cities, many open spaces with flowers and fountains and trees. And always there is the crowd that differs so much from an American or British crowd in having noticeable individuality: the old woman crossing the square and blowing a bugle to let the public know that she is selling newspapers, the old fellow in velveteens

pulling a handcart with the help of an anxious dog, the dogs themselves that sink into such profound slumber the moment a halt is made, the shop-girls and working-girls with their obvious delight in existence, the farm-girls with their crown-shaped lace caps and velvet jackets—all this makes modern Tours an entertaining place to be in, this and the fact that one can walk down a main street and look at the house that the great Balzac was born in.

Embedded in the modern Tours is the old city which can show such a beautiful Renaissance mansion as the Gouin house; and the Hostelry of the White Cross in which one expects to find men-at-arms resting and instead comes upon workmen's families eating their soup in a perfect fifteenth-century setting; and the two towers that are left of the ancient Church of St. Martin; and then the Cathedral of St. Gatien, with its lovely windows, and attached to it a museum in which fragments of statuary removed from the cathedral are preserved: I remember those heads of musicians and men-at-arms as giving a very vivid impression of mediaeval types. There is a new cathedral dedicated to Saint Martin. The builders have wisely refrained from going into competition with the Gothic—it is a small and well-proportioned basilica.

And then there is the Museum of Fine Arts. The grounds and building themselves are of interest. The building was the archbishop's palace, and a very extensive palace it was even for a prelate who in previous days had been a prince. On the separation of the Church and State the palace became public property, the archbishop taking up residence in a street that now bears the name of Emile Zola. In the garden, now a small public park, is the most magnificent cedar I have ever seen, a cedar of Lebanon with hundreds of far-stretching branches. Inside the palace is a collection the nucleus of which was from collections belonging to the abbey and to near-by castles. There are remarkable works here—a Rembrandt, a few Bouchers, an Italian Resurrection and a Christ in the Garden of Olives, Houdon's splendid Diana in bronze, and, not equal to any of these but certainly very memorable, the portrait of Balzac. One cannot forget the head that looks as if it were swollen with the myriad characters of the Human Comedy.

Tours has every interest that a small and ancient capital can have. The country, to compare great things with small, resembles

Meath—a level green land with a slow river and with scores of castles within a day's journey of its center. These castles are not, as in Meath, castellated mansions or ruined keeps: they are real castles, magnificent places filled with Renaissance treasures and with gardens that are worth seeing for themselves.

Near Tours is Vouvray—that centre of a notable vintage—and it is an experience to go into the caves where the wine is ripened. Our guide sticks a candle on the end of a bar and takes us along wide tunnels. The ground is as hard as a cement floor with the marching of generations and the low ceiling of rock is as though varnished, but still rough with stalactites that are as long as nails. Here are great racks of bottles with heads down and other bottles standing up, the deposit cleared off and the wine ready for sale—thousands of racks of thousands of bottles. The bottles must have their contents stirred. When I heard this I thought it would take many hands working all the time in these streets and streets to turn and shake these bottles that gleam in the candlelight as the end of the bar is stuck amongst them. Not at all. The guide produces a primitive-looking toothed instrument and plunges it amongst them, shaking them and making a ringing that fills the caves. The ringing sounds jubilant, as if the wine, this sunshine of the hillside ripening in the dark recesses scooped out by generations, rejoiced at the contact with mankind.

In Tours and around it one feels close to Saint Patrick's elder, Saint Martin. Everywhere in picture or relief is that episode which is part of one's childhood memory—the officer on horseback cutting a roll off his cloak for the naked beggar who holds hands up to him from the roadside. One feels that a forefather of some we meet may have looked on the happening.

## II.—LES ILES DE LERINS.

WHERE the yachts of the world's millionaires are I saw a steamer ready for departure: a placard said it was bound for the islets of St. Honorat and Ste. Marguerite—the "Iles de Lerins." I went on board. As the steamer hastened towards the pine-clad islets twenty minutes and a half-hour outside of Cannes I told myself that after all and at last I was on my way to the place that I had long intended to make pilgrimage to—the islet on which our patron had been on—St. Honorat, where,



member of a community the elder saint had founded, St. Patrick had spent a time that was, perhaps, of preparation for his mission.

My fellow-passengers had no thought about St. Patrick, or even about St. Honorat. They were of the populace whose custom it is to spend Sundays on these islets in the Ligurian Sea—tram-conductors and concierges from Nice with Madame and Baby, equipped with fishing rods and baskets and supplied with wine and comestibles; boys and girls out of department-stores who get much fun out of each others humours; laundresses; young work-girls who have made their own dresses and who are sure they are very *chic*—they keep to themselves but would probably tolerate an advance of a not too alarming nature; young soldiers who are being treated to an outing by an aunt or an uncle; a Carmelite nun who is being taken out by her sister, but who, even on an outing, keeps a habit of silence. All have the good spirits of French holiday-makers—something quite distinct from the Coney Island and Hampstead Heath spirit: this populace is trained to have a feeling for the aesthetic and historic scene.

The bulk of my fellow-passengers got off at the larger islet—Ste. Marguerite. I stayed on until the steamer reached St. Honorat, the islet on which is the Abbey of Lerins, the islet that St. Patrick stayed on. It was something to see this islet in the sparkling sea and to realize that here a devoted man had prepared himself for a mission to a land that was far outside this Mediterranean world.

I said something about Patrick to the Cistercian monk who conducted the visitors through the Monastery. Yes, he said, Patrick was a worthy man and the community had many good memories of him. I was surprised at the actual recollection that his tone implied. But then I discovered that the abbots of Lerins often take the name of Patrick. So it was an abbot he spoke of, not the missionary. He showed us many ancient things—pre-Christian things, too. But it is not the ancient, but the every-day things of the Abbey that takes us back to the time when this islet kept some cultivation in a Europe beset by Huns and Visigoths. It is in the hymns sung and the prayers said; it is in the benediction given to us; it is in the bottle of wine and the bottle of oil and cruse of water on the tables in the refectory where the monks eat silently; it is in the order that gives a sense of watchfulness and withdrawal.

The strong, high tower that rises above the sea—the beginning of it was a fortification to protect the community from the Saracens. But the monks were a long while upon the islet by that time. St. Honorat was here when the world was still Roman. It was to his successor that Patrick came. I look upon a fresco of St. Honorat, his community about him, banishing the serpents from this place; one had wound itself around a tree and looks as if it would take a good deal of spiritual force to dislodge it. What a curious coincidence it is that both St. Honorat and St. Patrick have the legend of serpent-driving attached to them. St. Honorat had a sister: she was Ste. Marguerite, and her convent was on the larger islet; she would often come over to talk with her brother. But St. Honorat was very resolved to give all his time to the thought of God and the work of the community, and he ruled that she was to cross over only when the cherry tree on the side of the islet facing hers was in blossom. The blossoms stayed on that particular cherry-tree long after they went from the others, and St. Honorat, understanding that the conversations that solaced his sister need not draw him from God and the work of salvation, let her come to his islet when she would.

Mounting the tower I look over the pine-covered islet, over the sea, too, that with its gleams and ripples is like a net, and towards the mountains which are coned, humped, and serried. I can see another islet—a small, rocky one—and a man who is also on the look-out tells me a surprising thing about it.

A fiddler who lived into the middle of the nineteenth century was accused of having made a bargain with the Devil. Need I say that his name was Paganini—he of the sorcerer-like-appearance whose playing had such a hypnotic effect on his audience. I imagine that this strange personage belonged to one of the occult societies that tried to have dealings with unorthodox spiritual powers or gave out that he belonged to such. Well, on his way to Genoa, his native place, he died in Nice of a cholera that was raging there. His son was with him; he took the body on a ship to have it buried in Genoa. The Genoese clergy refused burial to Paganini. The body was taken to Cannes, but Cannes refused to let it be landed; it was taken to Marseilles, and Marseilles refused burial to it. Then the ship with Paganini's body sailed for Genoa. On the way to the little islet that we see from the tower was sighted. There was no living person on it to raise any objection, so the

body was landed and buried on it. All this information had some present interest for me, for I had, just the day before, happened on the house that owns to being the place of Paganini's demise. But I should rather say that it emblazons itself as that. For it has a tablet on which appears the name of the artist who composed the inscription and the name of the one who carved it. And it is fitting that these names should be given for it would be hard to find a better carved or a more eloquent inscription. It is in Latin and it says that in this city that potent bow was last exercised and that from this house the musician rose into the fountain of eternal harmony. The house is in a street neighbouring the cathedral of Nice. As to the islet, it has to be said that the body no longer rests there: five years after its burial his son disinterred the remains and brought them to Genoa where all that was mortal of the strange magician-musician was given proper burial.

And now for Ste. Marguerite. A fortress that does not look dismantled stands up at one end of the islet. Golden broom spreads under the dark, bending pines. There is a restaurant; I overhear one of the young sheiks of the department-store offer, in the tone of a man of the world, cocktails to one of the young ladies. The offer is spurious, of course, and the proper, deflating reply is given him. The tram-conductors and the concierges are tranquilly fishing—they'll catch nothing, but that won't matter. I find the restaurant; the boys and girls are drinking "Limonade" and entertaining each other with songs and recitations; the young gentleman who had made the offer of cocktails is giving an imitation of Maurice Chevalier which I find more tolerable than the original. And having no one to dance with, no one to recite to, I go towards the fortress which looks as if it had been a long time garrisonless.

The cobbled way goes up in tiers. On each side are the most majestic of wild flowers, towers of white blossom overlaid by mauve in which big black golden bees are foraging—the acanthus. There is a broken-down guard-house and beyond it an iron-studded postern. I enter a court-yard or drill-ground. There is a clock that has been stopped and a bell that hasn't been rung and a well out of which the bucket hasn't been drawn up for hundreds of days. A barrack was in the fortress. The rows of dwellings are in good repair; a cypress stands upright in a yard; an aloe



like a stack of grey-green swords gives an exotic touch to the empty scene. . . . A fortification and a barrack in proper order have nothing of romantic interest: the scene is too definite, too decided, too ordered. But a barrack that is crumbling, a fortification over which the grass is growing, have high romantic interest. One hears the last roll of the drums and sees the flag dropping down. I think of the soldiers' wives who planted the geraniums before the doors of the married quarters: they are a jungle of scarlet blooms now. The barrack is modern but the fortress has centuries behind it. As I stand before it something in the setting, in the atmosphere, suggests a Dumas adventure to me. And the suggestion is not inapt, as I am to discover.

Marshal Bazine, sentenced to twenty years detention for his unenterprise, was in this fortress. But the Marshal had friends; he was able to make his escape from the islet after seven months of watching the Ligurian sea and he spent the rest of his days in Madrid. Very likely the authorities were willing enough to have him slip down a rope and get into a boat on a not too bright night. But Ste. Marguerite held two more notable prisoners: the man who wore the iron mask and the man who invented the steam-ship.

The second of these interesting personages was sent here for getting ahead of an influential courtier in a love-affair. He was Claude de Jouffroy d'Abbans. From the cell that the Man in the Iron Mask had been in he watched the convicts labouring in the King's galleys and perhaps some fellow-feeling caused him to dream of some way of ending this immemorially dreadful toil. He thought of a boat driven by steam and he achieved the making of one. But it was ignored by the government and by the public. Now they are putting up a plaque to his memory in Ste. Marguerite, for it is just one hundred and fifty years since he was here. I care more for the Man in the Iron Mask than for this man of unpatented invention. I go into the cell where he was kept (the Man in the Iron Mask, I mean, but they were both in it). It is spacious enough and it has a high ceiling; the chair he used is hanging on the wall. He had room to walk about. But the window has a grille of iron bars, with another grille beyond it, and another beyond that again. As I look through the bars I see a butterfly lighting on the stones outside. Its spread of wings is as wide as my two palms together. Butterflies certainly attain considerable dimensions on the islet of Ste. Marguerite.

# LANDGARTHA

A FORGOTTEN IRISH DRAMA.

*By La Tourette Stockwell*

THE first play to be written by an Irishman seems to have been *Ram's Alley ; or Merrie Tricks*, published at London in 1611, the authorship of which is attributed by Mr. William J. Lawrence to Lord James Barry of Cork. The first play to be written by an Irishman, which utilized Irish material and was written specifically for an Irish audience, was *Landgartha*, a tragi-comedy written by Henry Burnell and published at Dublin in 1641. Barry was the first among those wild geese of the pen who have contributed so notably to the brilliancy of the English drama. Burnell, "a Gentleman of Ireland" who "England never saw'st" was the first and one of the few who stayed at home and wrote for the Dublin theatre. Of Burnell's life, nothing is known, but of his play, something may here be said.

At the outset, it may be well to state, that *Landgartha* is by no means a masterpiece of the dramatic art. No such claim is made for it. It is a pseudo-historical drama which is inordinately dull except when Burnell forgets himself and writes as an Irishman rather than a dramatist. Burnell's lapses however, are significant, first, because they help us to recreate to some extent the atmosphere of Dublin's first playhouse, and, secondly, because they mark his play as the earliest extant example of Anglo-Irish drama, that is Irish drama written in English.

*Landgartha* was "first acted S. Patricks day, 1639, with the allowance of the Master of Revels" and printed at Dublin in 1641 "as it was presented in the new Theater in *Dublin*." The Master of the Revels by whom it was licensed was John Ogilby, a Scotch dancing master who had come to Ireland in the train of Thomas, Earl of Strafford, and shortly after been endowed by Strafford with the office of the revels. The "new Theater" in which it was performed was the little theatre on Werburgh-street which had been built by Ogilby in 1637 and was directed by him from 1637 until 1641.

Previous to this production of *Landgartha*, Burnell seems to have written another play which had also been acted at the Werburgh-street theatre. This, however, apparently had touched

too nearly the foibles of the Dublin audience because Burnell,

having not forgot,  
How in's first Play, he met with too much spite

in *Landgartha*, caused the Prologue to be delivered by "*an AMAZON with a Battle-axe in her hand.*" Thus equipped for criticism, the lady proceeded to bespeak the favour of the audience, and

t'invite

(If it be possible) all minds to affect  
What of himselfe, he could not well expect  
From his detractors: Or, to let those know,  
He cares not each of them prove still a foe.  
Yet, this his second (as that first) be made  
To please you, not for Money; to invade  
Your wills for your owne profit. For, if his minde  
He had sought by it to content, you'd finde  
Another method in't; and not a word  
Of any mirth or love, wo'd he afford  
To make you laugh or languish. All, riche stuffe  
(Though not so pleasing) he'd expose, to cuffe  
(And generally too) the monster vice;  
Which he performs but gently, in this piece.  
Yet it's beleevd't will please the most and best,  
In all the passages; and for the rest,  
Let 'em (if they will needs) in pudles swim:  
For he sleights them more, than they can wrong him.

This irascible, old reformer, who possessed the contemporary masculine conception of the basic fragility of feminine virtue, then went on to dedicate his play to "*all faire, indifferent faire, vertuous, that are not faire and magnanimous Ladies.*" He continued by informing them that "the form and faculties of the minde, doe farre excell in worth those of the body; Yet both joyind (as in *Landgartha*) is of all the most excellent," and ended up by presenting them with *Landgartha* as a model of "Chastity and other vertues joyn'd to beauty, vertue single, and manly fortitude." Apparently the ladies in the Dublin audience were magnanimous and took his moral-pointing in an amiable spirit,



for *Landgartha* was acted "with good applause," and "was for several years in possession of the stage."

The play opens with Frolla, King of Sweland, who has acquired Norway, indulging in a wholesale royal ravishment of all its fairest women. *Landgartha*, a Norwegian lady, and several feminine followers, "*all attyr'd like Amazons, with Battle-axes in their hands and Swords on*" arise and go forth to avenge the wrongs of their countrywomen. Simultaneously, Reyner, King of Denmark, invades the country and joins forces with *Landgartha*. In the course of the ensuing battle with Frolla, *Landgartha* and Frolla have a hand to hand combat front stage. Reyner arrives in time to admire the technique with which *Landgartha* dispatches the king and promptly falls in love with her, with the result that most of the second act is taken up with his languishing for her favour. Eventually, having kept him dangling a decorous length of time, she promises to marry him and the third act opens upon a room at court where a masque is to be held in celebration of their nuptials.

It is at this point that Ireland and Norway become identified as one and this third act obviously is realistic and based on such happenings as Burnell might have witnessed many times at Dublin Castle. It opens with the entrance of the guests. Among the first to arrive are Cowsell and Radgee, "two foolish Coxcombes" and as they converse we get an explicit picture of the daily itinerary of a young country gentleman about Dublin. Thus:

I dare speake it brother, we are very neere  
As good drinkers, as you be here i' th' Citie :  
For you see, when we come to Towne, we doe  
Nothing but runne from Taverne, to Taverne ;  
Oft to blind Ale-houses, to visit the fine  
Wenches, of purpose there plac'd, to draw custome ;  
Now and then to see a Play, when we want  
Other exercise ; and once a weeke (upon  
A holy day, when all doores are shut up)  
To a godly exhortation, and sleepe out  
(At least) three parts on't.

Into the midst of this fashionable chatter then breezes Hubba, "an humourous merry, *Danish* Captaine" and Marsisa "an

humourous gentlewoman." Marsisa wears "*an Irish Gowne tuck'd up to mid-legge, with a broad basket-hilt Sword on, hanging in a great Belt, her hayre dishevell'd, and a payre of long neck'd, big-rowll'd Spurs on her heels.*" In this "Irish Gowne" did the character of a witty, volatile Irishwoman make her first appearance on the Dublin stage. Into her conversation, moreover, creeps an occasional Irishism and even a note of patriotic loyalty. For example,

*Hub.* . . . Y'are Cossen-german to th' Lady *Fatyma* ?

*Mar.* Herselfe dare not deny it, sir.

*Hub.* I doe not

Onely marke your sweet face, but all things else  
About you. Y'have a fine legge. The fashion of this  
Gowne, likes me well too ; I think you had  
The patterne on't from us, as we from *Ireland*.

*Mar.* That I know not, but am sure a handsome woman  
Lookes as well in't, as any dresse, or habit  
Whatsoever.

Such a remark in the Dublin theatre, in an era when a woman to feel fashionably dressed had to import all her clothes from London or the Continent, was sufficiently daring to have caused a feminine scandal.

Shortly after Marsisa's appearance, the king and queen take their places "*under a Canopie*" and the masque begins. During its performance, various divertissements are introduced. Six satyrs "*dance a short nimble anticke*," Hector encounters and kills Achilles "*in a dumbe show by way of a Dance*" and "*the Nymphs of Mount Ida*" sing a song "*in four or five parts, to a pleasing Tune.*" At the conclusion of the masque, however, such conventional entertainments are dispensed with and Marsisa and Hubba "*Dance the whip of Donboyne merrily.*"

Thus the third act ends in the amenities of an Irish dance. In the fourth act, Burnell recovers his poise, and abandons his Irish colouring and the plot runs out its moralistic course. It opens with Reyner's unceremonious desertion of Landgartha. He returns to Denmark and there discovers that Harold, a competitor for his throne, is about to advance upon him with an army. In the fifth act Landgartha hears of this, and waiting only long

enough to give birth to a child, leads another army to the rescue of her errant husband. After the victory, discovering that during his absence from her he has had a mistress, she refuses to remain with him as his wife, although he now penitent, implores her not to leave him. Notwithstanding, she returns to Norway in vigorous Amazonian indignation and the play ends with Vraca, his ex-mistress left alone to announce mournfully, that she

will from hence :

By future good to expiate her offence.

Apparently, among the Dublin audience which witnessed this play, there were the usual people who like a happy ending. Concerning these misguided souls, Burnell observes in his post-script to the printed play :

*Some (but not of the best judgements) were offended at the Conclusion of this Play, in regard Landgartha tooke not then, what she was perswaded to by so many, the King's kind night-imbraces, To which kind of people, (that know not what they say) I answer, (omitting all other reasons :) that a Tragi-Comedy sho'd neither end Comically or Tragically, but betwixt both : which Decorum I did my best to observe, not to goe against Art, to please the over-amorous.*

Such, then, is *Landgartha*, a slight play, but one which is significant because it holds the latent germ of that literary movement which more than two hundred years after Burnell, turned to Ireland for its inspiration, and found its first real and fundamental expression in the plays of Yeats and Synge and of those who have come after them.

# THE SECRET OF MUSIC

## II.—MUSIC ITSELF.

**A**N examination of the fitful and uneven light thrown on music by the flambeaux of "programme"—verse, a libretto, dance, gesture, pageant, acting—led us to the conclusion that though the spirit of music may try to incarnate itself within the form of another art, overshadowing it, as in drama or commingling with it, as in opera, there remain musical secrets incommunicable thus, be the embodiment never so apt to the composer's purpose. In the compromise, an esoteric element, which seems to be the core of the composer's intention escapes or is occluded: music's deepest secret is confided exclusively to the structures of sound. We turn, then, to "absolute" or abstract music to see if there we can discern the musician's intent, the meaning which is divined as anterior to the form. But is there in fact, it will be asked, an absolute music, intelligible to "plain" people? Is there "pure" music, distinct from "applied," as there is pure mathematics? In this current epoch of artistic relativity can we define anything in a seeming multiple universe without reference to something else?

A simpler generation indeed attempted it. I find in a musical encyclopaedia, set out with all the brave confidence of the nineteenth century, a definition of absolute music, by Sir F. A. G. Ouseley. For him it is "music which depends solely on itself for its effects and in no wise depends on words . . . or any other extraneous condition." But this throws little light on music itself and twentieth century critics will ask, could not Wagnerites have fitted into this definition the greater bulk of their master's music, albeit written around the mediaeval history of a Tristan or a Hans Sachs or the saga of the Nieblung's Ring? Assuredly drama is not "extraneous" to these "music-dramas" and this music can fend for itself. Also, for all the "absoluteness" claimed by his contemporaries for Wagner's great rival, Brahms, does not some "taint" of programme attach to him too—as witness his *lieder* and the *Academic*, *Festival* and *Tragic* overtures, not to cite *The Requiem*? That dead controversy of "pure *versus* programme music" in which Liszt, Joachim and others warred upon each other, making an irrelevant interlude of musical battle cries, Brahmsite and Wagnerian, in which the music itself was temporarily hushed, is forgotten because the reality which discovered



itself in the great music of both Wagner and Brahms ultimately cancelled their conflicting propagandas and left the 'seventies and all the following decades sceptical of labels and parties. It is well, then, to remind ourselves that however "abstract" music may be, it is only relatively "absolute." Even the greatest music is shaped by its own era and in eschewing programme we do not escape the limitations imposed on his art by the nature of the composer, himself a product of his time. That almost omniscient student of Wagner, Mr. Ernest Newman, points to a growing inner impulse increasingly propelling him towards symphonic form in his music, as drama followed drama. Nor would Wagner, who did not himself defend programme, have denied this. It is long since I read the ten volumes, translated by Ellis, in which he "communicated" with his friends upon "the art work of the future" and much else, but I still remember the glow and spontaneity of his rhapsodic homage to the symphonic Beethoven, in whom music reaches its most abstract depths. In Brahms, too, is there not a movement parallel to Wagner's approach to symphony, a deepening of his musical thought, a growth in tonal emotion and in that sense a growing abstraction? Take *The Double Concerto* in A Minor (for violin and 'cello) which displays the intimacy and freedom characteristic of chamber music, but of chamber music multiplied by I know now how many diameters up to the scope and reach of the greatest symphonic works; does he not here come near attaining—not indeed the titantic dimensions but—something of the gigantesque stride of Beethoven? We will return to this again, but first let us remind ourselves of some earlier music. There are the naive outpourings of Haydn and of the subtle-simple, melodious Mozart. Are not their communications—"delightful to the ravished sense"—absolute as being void of any sub-intent? Surely theirs must be the open secret discovered by Emerson, when apostrophising "The Rhodora (in answer to the question 'whence came the flower?')":

"Dear, tell them that if eyes were made for seeing,  
 "Then beauty is its own excuse for being."

But in the naivety we ascribe to Mozart and Haydn, do we not "impute ourselves," as philosophers say when reminding us that we read the limitations in our own minds into the universe in interrogating it? Are we not too unimaginative, too little attuned to the moods of an elder day to recapture adequately the

feelings of a Bach or a Haydn or a Mozart "in his habit, as he lived"? Even the translucent piano sonatas of Mozart contain hints of psychological challenge. We may share his more generalised emotions, understand his beliefs and try to occupy his angle of vision; but we cannot fully and yet simply re-think his thought or respond whole-heartedly to those specific hopes and fears personal to him. And he is too firmly rooted in his own era, too little self-conscious, to help us much. We may share Haydn's archaic joy in creation, but only a specialist studying him against the background of his predecessors will catch even the technical distinction which gives him a leading place in musical history—and that leaves our present quest unattained. We may agree with Clutton Brock and Lowes Dickinson that into his *Magic Flute* Mozart has breathed an original philosophy, simple and natural but native to him; yet it is with difficulty, if at all, that we discern here a budding thinker, a nascent mind freeing itself of the fetters of tradition. Absoluteness, abstractness, can we fit these mysteries into the lucidity of melodies whose significance we imagine we cannot miss? Imperfectly perhaps, for they do embody emotion and reveal it, but in *The Creation* and *The Magic Flute* we have strayed back into the world of programme; let us return to the Brahms *Double Concerto*.

In this noble work, a responsive mind feels there is something beyond the beauty of Emerson's flower, beyond texture, colour, fragrance, shape; a special quality which it is not in the power of "nature" to impart and for which we turn to that kind of human being with whom is born the power of transmitting, through sensuous sound, experiences acquired within a super-sensual mind, peculiarly, perhaps uniquely, original to himself. Here do we not catch an ear's glimpse of melodies dissolving programme, the voice of an individual speaking out of the time, race, culture in which he lives? These experiences, though their massiveness is impressive, moving from dignity to majesty in his great moments if perhaps too discursive in his more conventional moods, are unsensuous. They do not create thrills but have the breadth of outlook and freedom of scope we intuitively associate with the free play of mind. Less convincing perhaps is their alternating mood—a governed or perhaps a repressed gaiety, satisfying to the Teutonic but sometimes slightly heavy to the Latinic listener. Are not his impressive profundities best enjoyed, perhaps, in Central Europe, because there the idiom is best understood; and

is not the mood more characteristic, more interesting to his contemporaries than to ours? And can we ask better proof that here a musical mind is speaking to another responsive mind of its own age and mental climate. All art dates. Its form alone would determine that. And all races have special qualities giving them an interest and colour. Era and race speak in musical idioms of their own, a relative—abstract tongue.

Not that race or date is all. There seems, for instance, an associated relevance in remembering Schubert with Keats, as there is ever felt to be a kinship of Beethoven with Shakespeare. Keats' and Schubert's early deaths make but an accidental association; their lyric range and a later deepening to the epic—in music comparable with the symphonic form—is a closer link. And their date is less important than their temperament, which will be classified as sentimental or even sensuous if one's response is inadequate or rests mainly on the earlier works. Remember together the incompleted *Hyperion* and the *Unfinished Symphony*. Though aesthetic parallels must not be extended to infinity nor similarities be stretched to identity, is it fanciful to see a growth in artistic and human feeling, seeking for apter embodiment than is to be found within the rhyming line and the lyrical melody—a growth in abstractness in Ouseley's sense—in both of them? It is not merely form that is in question. The composer, the poet, each has something to say. He has his own gospel of beauty. If he desires to adventure into new forms or forms at the least still open to experimentation, that is secondary. Besides it is what the composer is "saying" the listener is straining to catch; no mere exploitation of forms will give him that.

Here one school of interpreter will put in a *caveat*. Schubert is not concerned like Keats or Shelley to hymn beauty. His function is to make it. It is the critic's to discern that beauty and enter into it, to trace curve and line and train his ear to follow them in the evanishing sounds. But the audience feels for something more cognate to human feeling, closer to the claims and needs of the individual Psyche. And, besides, sensuous beauty, they feel, is not enough. Here it is that critic and audience are liable to misunderstand each other, each seeking perhaps a different kind of beauty, and so I will speak at this point as counsel for unprofessional but sensitive hearers—being perhaps one of them. Such a hearer admits that he has not completely mastered all that marvel of technical equipment and grammar of



sound which the European brain devised and placed at the service of occidental music, and is to-day rendering more abstruse unmelodic and enigmatic. Although he may have learned to recognise the well known forms, fugue, sonata and quartet, concerto and symphony, or to contrast the movements within the form, *andante*, *adagio* and the rest; to develop an ear for modulation and a keen sense of tempo, rhythm, instrumentation and shading, he yet feels keenly if uneasily aware that these will not of themselves translate for him the masters' minds. It adds to his pleasure, probably, to know of a Bach fugue, that (I quote Mr. Fox Strangways' excellent synopsis) "in twelve notes it gives a whole compendium of melodic possibilities . . . of its two halves equal in point of time, the first rises and falls in long notes by leap, the second rises by step in short notes, and falls by step in still shorter." But when it is added that "there is not much more than these three things, rise and fall, long and short, step and leap, that melody can do," the imaginative listener to whom the fugue is played, audaciously takes that statement as a challenge to his intelligence. He inly answers (firmly but modestly, speaking out of another world than the instructed theorician's) "there is *much* else melody can do." Probably Mr. Strangways would agree that there is. It can melt away stubborn and perverse moods; it can create courage and hope or sympathy and solicitude. It can formulate dubieties and resolve them. It can transmute the values of life, so Beethoven promised, as to enable men "to rise above the miseries of existence." Was not Schubert feeling for this too? Was not Keats?

Hoping to find the hidden power by which this alchemy is effected, the kind of listener I am here imaging follows the symphony from bar to bar, watching confidently for a vista through the tangled forest of sound, as the boughs interweave and then disentangle themselves. He watches through threat and promise, borne on the storm waves of the orchestra, terrifying and delighting, darkening and shimmering in his brain, for melodic paths that may give a clue to the composer's own identity with his creation. And, as he listens, he glances at his programme. There, it may be, is a key to an alluring but eluding and esoteric mystery. He is told, perhaps, that Hindemith's music is "an expression of contemporary restlessness and frustration," which at least offers him the choice of congratulating Hindemith on his powers of criticism or of condoling with contemporary music on the subject



matter presented to it by an anarchical world ! But too often the commentator in the printed concert notes offers only such an analysis as Mr. Harvey Grace humourously retails in an article in *The Listener* of 18th October last :—" In the first movement of the second sonata the drama has begun. An ardent passion consumes him . . . But, in the second movement he so far recovers himself as to be able to joke with us. In the third . . . there is no hint of tragedy . . . only serenity . . . the lion caresses. Beethoven is happy." But is the listener ? Or, does a writer hope to bring home to an audience some of the hidden treasures of a master-piece who writes thus : " The composer seems to want to shake off the nocturnal hauntings of this section in the singular tremolo in order to return to the first gay and light idea. Still the demon is in him ; he plays unharmonically with B Flat and A Sharp and playfully snatches at the remote key of B Natural until the movement closes with the delicate lowering chord of B Flat Major." In this odd commentary, whose source I have forgotten, one feels the honest expression of a mind bewildered, searching for words in which to record remote experience. But such well meant exposition is surely excuse enough to incline those who love music, but who would say they do not " understand " it, towards expressionism through programme, as a less ambiguous sort of utterance than music so abstracted from life as is here presented. Here absolute music is made as unintelligible as that metaphysic of his own day which Carlyle dismissed as " the thrice refined pabulum of transcendental moonshine."

In search of a more concrete symbolism than this, the reader may come upon a new book, which offers a very different solution. Mr. Rutland Boughton's *The Reality of Music*, Keegan Paul & Co., is a forthright and courageous attack upon what may be termed unnaturalism in music. It is valiant in its outspoken opinions, but it is not chiefly with its opinions that we will concern ourselves ; from some of these musicians will dissent, from others, theologians and philosophers, while the casual reader may feel irritation at a tendency to dogmatise from incompletely investigated data in terms of incompletely articulated and yet over-rationalised propositions. Disengaged readers, however, will draw stimulus for fresh thinking from Mr. Boughton and, remembering that he is himself a noted contemporary composer, even theorists with fully formulated views on the relations of music and life may usefully accept the temporary discipline of confronting

his fresh and honest mind. His argument does not easily lend itself to brief restatement; he works too close to the surfaces of life to allow room for examining its deeper values and gives too much of his space to elucidating the scriptural or folk or literary texts which the composers he cites have clothed in the garbs of music. His handling of values needs a more delicate manipulation than he seems to realise, especially when they include incommensurables of belief or sentiment, though in moments of insight he is led to utterances difficult to reconcile completely with his main thesis. This may be stated, perhaps over-simply, in two sentences of his own: "Music needs cross fertilisation by life" and "real music can only result from something real in human life." He expands these reiterated *leit motifs* into dissertations upon the relationship of music to love, death, sex, motherhood, war—which he examines as bases. To them he brings as tests his favoured psychology of a "dividual" or "communal" outlook; but, for all the stout ratiocination for which he contends, Mr. Boughton provides himself with the means of retreat into an imperfectly apprehended mystical reservation.

If this ambiguity makes his efforts to relate musical structures to literary contents elusive, it is responsible for several vistas which give the book distinction. They serve to convince his readers that Mr. Boughton is aware that great art is created in an air too tenuous for any but deep breathed inhalations. That is why, after we question a seeming hard-and-fast realism, as when he writes: "The composers between Beethoven and Wagner were lesser masters, not always because their technical skill was less but because *they generally and deliberately chose romance instead of life* for their subject matter" (the italics are mine), we discover that the seemingly dogmatic statement is in fact tentative. At least I interpret the generalisation a few pages later: "Bach and Beethoven drew back into a sphere where their powers were reinforced by a power which in non-musical activities they did not possess. Having made that withdrawal, they returned, bringing with them something worth having which had previously been unimaginable," as an admission that not the crude ore of realism but the imaginative genius of the composer refining upon it gives to the world the treasures of rare art. Whether we call this a "romantic" art or not is of small consequence. It is the unimaginable element, their genius, that confers immortality on their work. If Mr. Boughton in his positive and laudable avowals

of "reality" (which we think he sometimes mistakes for factuality and naturalism) emphasises this less definitely than he might, he is not blind to it. "Nothing is more significant of the base nature of modernist art," he asserts, "than its reversion to forms of primitivism, and its ignorance of the ascensive, emotional and intellectual forces which caused real primitive art to develop in finer and more beautiful conceptions." Emphatic that life involves a material basis, he but vaguely admits "a mystic residue in music." This he does not further define—we believe because he has virtually overlooked abstract music in his anxiety to be starkly concrete. But if abstract music may lead to vague and loose thinking, we have found that programme is misleading. Stimulated by Mr. Boughton's thinking, we now suggest that if "reality" is to be found anywhere in music, it must derive primarily from the artist's interior insight and vision; these may illuminate external reality but must not merely reproduce it. That assumes indeed that there is an external reality and so involves an inner reality besides. But, are we justified in thus dividing reality into moieties? And, if we are, what have they to do with music? There may be a world of "things" and another of "thoughts" for the philosopher, but surely the musician's world is not concerned with idealism, pragmatism and all the rest of the verbal abstractions out of which the metaphysician solemnly constructs the dialogues of his puppet-drama? Well, it is scarcely wise to dismiss philosophy so lightly. We cannot find satisfaction in a "reality" which omits the composers' minds from their works, works wrought out of and absorbed into the texture of their own being, and which produce in a listening audience a sense of the poetry as well as the life revealed in tone. If we agree that naturalism is not at the heart of music we must look elsewhere. We have found substance for the belief that neither the restrictions of a carefully defined programme in which music is bound by verbal manacles nor the compulsion of a realism in which music is invoked as an echo to life itself reveals those secret enchantments of suspense, surprise and satisfaction which are its distinctive attributes. We have still to consider their opposite poles [artistic phantasy and the individual composer's reaction to spiritual experience], only so far glanced at.

*(To be continued).*

# THE IRISH THEATRE IN 1933

*By Andrew E. Malone*

THE year 1933 was merely a good average year in the Irish Theatre, with a dozen new plays by Irish authors presented to the public in Dublin's two repertory theatres. The number of first plays offered by new authors was much below the average of recent years—only three having been staged in the twelve months. For some years it has been apparent that the urge towards dramatic expression, which was so marked a feature of the literary life of Ireland even a decade ago, has lost its force, and that all the literary ability and energy of Irish authors are now devoted to the novel. With such notable writers as Liam O'Flaherty, Brinsley MacNamara, Francis Stuart, Frank O'Connor, Peadar O'Donnell and Sean O'Faolain devoting themselves almost entirely to the writing of novels it will be plain that for the present, at least, the drama has lost the overwhelming appeal it once had for Irish writers. Ten years ago, and even more so twenty years ago, all who aspired to literary eminence in Ireland set themselves primarily to the writing of plays for the Abbey Theatre: now it is the novel that attracts most attention, so that a poet of the reputation of Austin Clarke has actually deserted verse for fiction, and another in F. R. Higgins with a reputable dramatist like T. C. Murray are both reported to have turned to the novel as the medium of their future work.

Next to the dearth of new plays and new playwrights the most notable feature in the theatrical life of Dublin and Ireland is the meteoric rise of the Dublin Gate Theatre. Founded only a few years ago in the little Peacock Theatre, which is normally associated with the activities of the Abbey Theatre Schools of Acting and the Ballet, and "in association with the London Gate Theatre," the Dublin Gate Theatre has quickly achieved success and popularity since its removal to the permanent Theatre in the famous Rotunda Buildings. It is to "the Gate," rather than to "the Abbey," that the younger generation of Irish playwrights seems to turn by instinct and to which the younger players and playgoers give most of their attention. This is a tribute very richly deserved to the enthusiasm and artistic ability, amounting almost to genius, of Hilton Edwards and Michael MacLiammoir, the founders of the Theatre and its Artistic Directors from the beginning. In Dublin Hilton Edwards has achieved the reputation of being a really great "producer," and a stage director of genius; while the splendid settings and costumes devised and designed by Michael MacLiammoir are always as delightful to the eye of the playgoer as they are appropriate to the play which they frame and decorate. In some important respects the Dublin Gate Theatre now holds in the affections of Dublin playwrights, players, and playgoers the place which was held by the Abbey Theatre until a few years ago. The Abbey Theatre is apparently outmoded—for the moment.

The Abbey Theatre is chained to its tradition; not any more by a legal bond, but by its atmosphere and training. Its audiences have changed almost out of recognition; so that where once sat the disciples of the national drama now sit only those who come to the theatre "for a laugh." For some years past audiences at the Abbey Theatre have expected or desired nothing from it but laughter—long and continuous: an ironic fate for the offspring of the Irish



Literary Theatre of George Moore, Edward Martyn, and W. B. Yeats! So it is that the Abbey Theatre has come to specialise in the broadest of broad comedy, generally amounting to sheer farce, in which the more popular members of its Company certainly excel. Exactly the same state of things was noted in the Abbey Theatre some twenty years ago, and it was not until its comedians had departed that the Theatre reverted to its original purpose. At present audiences would seem to take care to avoid the Abbey Theatre unless they are assured in advance of continuous laughter—a phenomenon which first became prominent with the plays of Sean O'Casey. It is a little unusual that Dublin audiences, once famed for their appreciative and critical faculties, have laughed consistently at the plays of Sean O'Casey, even when their author expressly names them "tragedies"; and that 'Joxer' Daly, 'Captain' Boyle, and 'Fluther' Good now occupy the places vacated by the 'stage Irishman' of the 19th century. They are the 'playboys' of a new generation; realistic grotesques silhouetted by tragedy. Possibly similar decay would have become manifest had Sean O'Casey never written a play; but the effects of his plays on Abbey Theatre audiences have certainly been disastrous. Perhaps the real reason for this is that native Dubliners no longer frequent the theatre, and that the Dublin types in the O'Casey plays are truly funny to the semi-rural mind!

Another factor that has tended to weaken the support which the Abbey Theatre undoubtedly could rely upon in the immediate past is the absence of the Company for prolonged periods during the past three years in the United States. For the first six months of 1933 the Abbey Theatre was virtually closed; only a few performances having been given by a "Second Company" drawn mainly from the members of the Abbey Theatre School of Acting, with the assistance of some prominent amateurs. However good these extended tours may have been for the prestige of the Abbey Theatre in the United States they have undoubtedly been bad for the prestige of the Abbey Theatre at home. It is a fortunate thing that the tour suggested for the 1933-34 season was abandoned, and that the Company played on its own stage during the second part of the year. But even when the Company was at home there was a severe limitation in the authors who were presented. During the second half of 1933 the Company played for twenty-five weeks, during which plays by six playwrights were staged. The leading place was taken by Mr. Lennox Robinson, closely followed by Mr. George Shiels, and then far behind come Messrs. T. C. Murray, Brinsley MacNamara, and Sean O'Casey. Synge had a single week, while Messrs. Lennox Robinson and George Shiels were given fourteen weeks out of twenty-five. There was no Yeats, no Lady Gregory, no Colum—but, of course, people wanted to "be taken out of themselves," and life was earnest enough outside!

Despite the virtual closing for the first half of the year, and the monopolisation of the greater part of the second half by two authors, six new plays were produced at the Abbey Theatre during the year: two by the "Second Company," and four by the permanent Company after its return from the United States. Easily the most important play presented by the Abbey Theatre during the first part of the year was Mr. Lennox Robinson's *Drama at Inish*, which was produced later in London and New York as *Is Life Worth Living?* and revived in Dublin under the same title "by kind permission of Mr. Sydney W. Carroll." The change in title indicates clearly enough that the play may be interpreted

in at least two different ways—but it is permissible to suggest that the second title failed utterly to do justice to the basic theme. Described by its author as “an exaggeration,” *Drama at Inish* deals with the effects produced by a series of plays by the leading Continental dramatists upon the population of an Irish seaside village. Before the plays were presented the people were placidly unexcited, but the plays brought out all kinds of character twists and kinks in individuals as well as a variety of skeletons from family cupboards. When the curtain fell upon its first performance Mr. Robinson told the audience it was “a silly little play,” but in its silliness there is shrewd criticism of the Irish people and of the “high-brow” drama.

Irish seaside resorts are not famed for the way in which they seek to rival the attractions of Blackpool or Coney Island, but Inish would seem to have been a little better in that respect than the majority. Its efforts to attract the tourist and the frivolous holiday-maker, however, did not meet with success that its hotel-owners and boarding-house keepers thought they deserved, and that something out of the ordinary was needed as a stimulant. So John Twohig, who owned the Seaview Hotel as well as the Pavilion, set to work, and having enlisted the aid of the Monsignor and the local Deputy he decided upon the provision of really high-brow drama for Inish. In Mr. Hector De La Mare and his wife Constance Constantia he found the artists he needed, and the De La Mare Repertory Company was engaged for a season at the Inish Pavilion. It has to be noted that Mr. De La Mare, like Mr. Lennox Robinson himself, first experienced the thrills and joys of the higher drama in the gallery of a Cork theatre, and had in that lofty eminence of the impecunious lovers of the drama decided upon the stage career which had brought him in later years to the production of high-brow drama in such places as the Inish Pavilion. Tchekov, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Tolstoy may have made him a great actor but they failed utterly to win him a sufficiency upon which to live. And so he arrived at the Seaview Hotel in all the mouldering finery and shabby gentility of the old-time travelling actor. His clothes may have been mouldy, but he had still his greatcoat with its collar of fur, his large cravat and his spats, with which to impress the unsophisticated natives of Inish.

And impress the natives he certainly did ; not only with his clothes but with his repertory. So well did he succeed that after only two weeks of what Mrs. Twohig described as “drama in which half-mourning would be the most appropriate dress” Inish itself became a tragi-comedy. The sister of John Twohig discovered that she had been heartlessly treated in the dim past by Peter Hurley, T.D., and she carefully nursed a newly-discovered break in her heart ; the slip made by the little servant Helena was brought to the public notice by a scene from Tolstoy, and brought scandal upon apparently blameless people ; the local butcher was saved from a murder charge only by the badness of his aim with a hatchet ; and a couple of lovers were saved from untimely death only through their failure to place sufficient money in the gas-meter. The higher drama disturbed Inish so much that the sleepy village became “news,” and John Twohig decided to cancel the contract after Peter Hurley had cast the vote which defeated the government through the effect made upon him by seeing “An Enemy of the People.”

While it may have been 'good theatre' to treat this play, as was done in London, as a satire upon the Ibsen-Strindberg-Tchekov drama, it is more probable that its author designed it as a satire upon some prominent features in contemporary Irish life. Whatever be its meaning it is an excellent comedy, which was finely acted by Mr. Paul Farrell and a splendid company.

In *Men Crowd Me Round* Mr. Francis Stuart took the title for his first play from the lines "men crowd me round like moths around a flame." Essentially a fantasy the play at the same time gives an accurate view of the notions which possess the mass of the Irish people when an Irish delegation goes to England for negotiation or discussion. There is in the Irish people a deep suspicion, bred through the centuries, that all Irish delegations are suborned by the luxurious sophistication of English life, and that few Irishmen are strong enough to withstand the temptations. It is upon that lingering suspicion, fresh still in the minds of people familiar with the Nationalist Party at Westminster, that Mr. Stuart based his play. That he selected a theme difficult to dramatise few will deny; and many will say that Mr. Stuart utterly failed in the attempt. To achieve fantasy in terms of the realistic was too much for his prentice technique, and all that he achieved was to make his characters appear absolutely absurd. No living being could believe for a moment in the iron-willed Peter Considine, the Irish delegate who alone refused to compromise and who yet fell in love with Gemma Statick, the wayward daughter of a powerful newspaper magnate. So that she could continue her luxurious life after marriage with him Considine resigned his place in the Irish delegation, and with the withdrawal of his opposition peace was secured. In Ireland his followers believed that he had betrayed them for money and that luxury which money can provide; but in actual fact Considine had imagined all that happens. A rather extraordinary thing about the play is that the London society and literary people are much more vivid and vital than the Irish people, whom it is quite impossible to recognise as Irish at all. The play has all the defects of the novelist-dramatist, but it is intensely interesting and its author may do much better work for the stage when he becomes more certain of his technique.

In 1920 another new playwright, Mr. Frank X. O'Leary essayed to bring something new from the tears and anguish and heroism of the period from 1916 to 1923. It is unfortunate that all he could extract from the bitter ingredients is a mass of treacly sentimentality. With all the materials for a "plain tale from the hills" the author made only indifferent use of his plain tale. The story centres around the post office kept by the Kelleher family in Kilduff, a village in County Cork. Gertie Kelleher had just been appointed sub-postmistress to her aunt, and at once found herself in the middle of a plot. She became the object of a pacifist schoolmaster's affection, and herself fell a victim to the charms of the new District Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The schoolmaster, who believed that warfare of any kind was immoral, having been first taunted by Gertie as a coward and later trussed up by the local Commandant of the Irish Republican Army and compelled to hear Gertie's declaration of love for the Police Inspector, was used in the end to provide the tragedy. As the Inspector dined in a near-by house Gertie discovered that the I.R.A. intended to ambush him on his return journey to the barracks. How inform him of the impending danger? The priest: herself: her aunt: none would be quite secure,



and the unfortunate schoolmaster was requisitioned for the mission. At first he refused; but, hearing her decision that if he did not go she would go herself, he acquiesced. His return was on a stretcher; and his wretched end reveals the fact that it was he who was loved all the time. The whole business is unreal, and in production it was a play of women—its seven men were lost in the intricacies of its plottings. The inexperience of the author is revealed when he brings his dying schoolmaster on to the stage, after much preparation of mattresses for his reception. The first two acts, if slow in development, are interesting and dramatic enough to satisfy an average audience, but the third falls into appalling bathos. The end is much too bad to be true of a writer who made his first two acts so well, and yet another trial must be given him before he can be estimated as a playwright.

The third first play by a new author was *The Jezebel* by Mr. J. K. Montgomery, is a little one-act affair based upon a pun, and it contains more than enough evidence of immaturity and inexperience. The author is evidently from Ulster, and it is from that province that the material for the play was taken, and the laughs are at the expense of the puritanical outlook of Ulster's rural folk. Full of Bible lore and of "Golden Thoughts for the Day" the farmer Mathew White is nevertheless quite prepared to believe the worst rather than the best about his fellow-creatures, and the receipt of a letter from his daughter Mary in Belfast makes him think of her as "the Jezebel." Mary had found life on the farm too dull, and had betaken herself to the brighter environment of a city drapery store. Prosperity had come to her, so that she was taken to London to advise her employer in his purchasing; a fact that lent colour to her father's worst fears and suspicions. Her mother was made of more benevolent stuff, "an unbeliever" her husband said, and it was she who reminded him of the Magdalene when he forgot both his Christianity and his Eldership in the church. Jane White prepared a cradle for the prospective "wean," and hoped that it would be left with her to rear. The tongue of a gossiping neighbour and the woes of a rejected suitor were brought in to aid the play's weight, but its theme was too slight and its texture too fragile to offer much scope for characterisation. It ends, like a story by O. Henry, with the trick that the "baby" is only an "Austin Seven," but there was some amusement in it and the author will probably be heard of again in the Abbey Theatre. The play was awarded the First Prize by Mr. Desmond McCarthy at the Northern Drama Feis in 1932.

The outstanding play of the second half of the year at the Abbey Theatre was Mr. Brinsley MacNamara's *Margaret Gillan*, which is the best play that Mr. MacNamara has yet written and which would be notable in any modern theatre. This tragic story of the conflict between spiritual and carnal love moves on a high plane to a very powerful climax, and while it is essentially Irish in its atmosphere and characterisation it is universal in its problem and in its appeal. *Margaret Gillan* is, indeed, a play that should be successful in any part of the world. Having married for commercial rather than emotional reasons Margaret Gillan is left a widow with a declining business and a growing daughter. Her real love, John Briody, who had been rejected because he was "only a shop boy" was then her commercial rival and competitor, but she had throughout her life with Gillan regarded Briody as her real husband. Free again she turned naturally towards Briody, using every cunning device to attract him to her house, a matter



made all the more easy by the terms of an iniquitous will. She is shattered when Briody proposes to marry not herself but her daughter, and her love turned to hatred she is launched on a course of vengeance. Having regarded Briody as her own husband she persuades herself that he has married his own daughter, and uses every weapon to break him physically and commercially. She will even marry a man for whom she cares nothing to revenge herself upon a spiritual husband, and the untimely death of her daughter causes her little distress—it was but a visitation on Briody. Ultimately, with some assistance from a cunning and unscrupulous schoolmaster-lawyer she manages that the will which seemed to be designed especially for her enslavement is turned to her advantage, and she has the satisfaction of seeing Briody reduced once again to subservience to her will. Every indignity that she could contrive she heaps upon him, and in the end she murders him in a fit of cumulative rage. Margaret Gillan is one of the most interesting studies of “a woman scorned” that has been seen on the Irish stage for a long time. Her obsession verges upon insanity, and occasionally makes her motives almost incomprehensible; but she is a figure of immense power and force, and Mr. MacNamara presents her complex character, and her simmering fury, in masterly fashion. *Margaret Gillan* is a brilliant play, a real tragedy in which the victims are in the grip of forces greater than themselves and even not understood by themselves. They are the victims of circumstance—the sport of the Fates—brought to their tragic clash by a will that is a masterpiece of chicanery.

The year was brought to a close by a new play by Mr. George Shiels, who is now apparently firmly established as the most popular playwright of the Abbey Theatre. The Shiels plays are usually as far removed from life as they are from literature, and *Grogan and the Ferret* is certainly not a brilliant exception. It “gets its laughs,” and having done that its function is ended. It would seem as if the playwright gets his knowledge of contemporary life only at second hand; in the memory only. The effect is rather that of a hall of mirrors in a fancy fair, where ordinary normal people see themselves distorted into all kinds of queer freakish shapes. His plays are, therefore, filled with abnormal people whose peculiarities secure the laughter which fills the theatre and rattles money into the box-office till. *Grogan and the Ferret* contains internal evidence that it was written some little time ago, as all the events referred to have passed into history with the Ireland of at least ten years ago, and like all plays by George Shiels its humours depend largely upon the antics of freakish wastrels. Grogan is a man who has been dispossessed of his home and his business by the sheriff, and as a bankrupt mendicant he reposes in the stables of his neighbour, John Byrne, in company with a disreputable tailor named Blakes. Blakes is a representative of a type of loquacious tramp frequently encountered on Irish roads, with a tag or a verse to meet every situation, and a thirst which has given a bulbous and almost incandescent nose, while his friend Felix Grogan’s fate has been determined largely by his political antipathy to his next-door neighbour Miss Hatty. This Miss Hatty has been nicknamed “The Ferret” on account of her activities in discovering everything that happened in the little community. The plot revolves about the efforts to retrieve Grogan from the gates of the workhouse by securing for him an Old Age Pension. Grogan was only 67 years old, but that was no barrier to his eligibility for a Pension in the eyes of John

Byrne, who was the local political 'boss' and whose proud boast it was that "many of the lads have the Pension at 40." Miss Hatty has different views and it is her intervention that keeps the plot moving. *Grogan and the Ferret* is little better than a series of music-hall 'turns' strung on a slender thread of a plot; yet it has many of the qualities that make for popularity nowadays in the Abbey Theatre. In the last resort, however, it is the Abbey Theatre Company's acting that makes the play tolerable, and in the hands of any other company the whole thing would degenerate rapidly into sheer farce.

*You Never Can Tell*, Bernard Shaw's well-known comedy, received its first presentation by the Abbey Theatre Company as the year ended.

At the Gate Theatre six new plays by Irish authors were staged for the first time during the year, but there was no first play from a new author. Of these easily the most provocative was *A Bride for the Unicorn*, by E. W. Tocher (Denis Johnston), who had achieved considerable distinction at home and abroad with *The Old Lady Says No!* and *The Moon in the Yellow River*. For a full understanding of these plays a familiarity with events and personalities of contemporary Ireland may be needed, and it was probably the lack of such understanding that accounted for the comparative failure of such a good play as *The Moon in the Yellow River* in New York and London. In *A Bride for the Unicorn* no such familiarity is needed, as the play deals with ideas and characters not in any way localised. For the first time Mr. Tocher went outside Ireland for his theme, and he has adopted an average man in the world of to-day as his hero. As presented at the Gate Theatre the play was rather like an adaptation of *Peer Gynt* by Ernst Toller or Georg Kaiser. The technique is expressionistic, so that greater demands are made upon the producer than upon the actors. *A Bride for the Unicorn* follows the life and death of one John Phosphorus, like Kipps, a petty shopman, much as Mr. C. K. Munro related the *Life and Death of Mr. Eno*. John Phosphorus is the ordinary man yearning for romance but precluded by his circumstances from attaining to it. While in the act of stock-taking at the year's end he is interrupted by some old school friends in an intoxicated state. They persuade him to accompany them to an "Old Boys' Dinner," and when their persuasive powers prove unavailing they go away with one of the 'dummy' figures from the shop. This 'dummy' comes to life—"Very Stylish" it is labelled—and makes a pact with Phosphorus by the terms of which beauty is revealed to him in the person of a woman who desires that he shall never ask a question without knowing the answer in advance. There is a wedding ceremony, but when Phosphorus retires to his room in the same hotel where the "Old Boys" are dining his bride has disappeared. But he has experienced something by which the course of his life is changed—there has been revelation without achievement. In actuality or so it would seem, Phosphorus married the love of his boyhood, Doris, and lives in domestic disharmony with her and their child; but the dream of the ideal persists and Phosphorus will continue to strive for the absolute. So he finds himself involved in a war in which he fraternises with the enemy; in a court of justice where lawyers play pranks with the law; at a Peace Conference in which statesmen and soldiers are fatuous; and finally again encounters his dream bride, only to discover that she is Death. The undercurrent of the play is the quest of the Golden Fleece, and the legend is treated much as another classical legend was treated by James

Joyce in *Ulysees*. The seven companions of John Phosphorus all strive for material things, and all are more or less successful in their quest. The play is filled with a delightful gallery of satirised figures, finely conceived and but slightly caricatured, so that the commentary is bitter at times. *A Bride for the Unicorn* is, in effect, a thoroughly enjoyable "fantasia on modern themes" which should prove stimulating to a jaded world. It is a very arresting play, and one that may well prove to be a turning-point in the career of its author. Having now apparently done all that can be done with his chosen technique it will not be surprising if Mr. Tocher should turn towards the 'well-made' realistic play in the Ibsen tradition.

The Earl of Longford contributed two new plays during the year: *Agamemnon* a translation of the classical trilogy, and *Yahoo* a contribution to the explanation of the enigma of Jonathan Swift. It was a daring thing to attempt to bring a lyrical tragedy designed for production in an amphitheatre as an integral part of a religious festival within the compass of the stage of an 'intimate' theatre; yet that is what Lord and Lady Longford did in their *Agamemnon*. Having adapted episodes of Greek and Roman history to the needs of modern satirical comedy, they have completely civilised this trilogy of "primitive passion and savage deeds." Cassandra may find "the field of the dead rushing red on the sight," but what the audience saw and heard were cultivated ladies and gentlemen meeting and speaking in very bright surroundings. It may be doubted whether drama like the *Oresteia* can or should be brought within the framework of the proscenium arch, where it loses inevitably that spaciousness which gave its pristine vigour. As the audience at the Gate Theatre listened to Klytaimnestra (as the translators spell the name) and Orestes there was not the faintest suggestion of primitive passion or savage deed, and even the killing of Klytaimnestra by Orestes was a most gentlemanly affair. The primitive savagery had gone, but something remained that made of Aeschylus a contemporary dramatist. The victorious soldier returns, as he did in 1920, to find himself supplanted in his wife's affections, murdered, and avenged. Orestes is pursued by visible conscience, only to be relieved by the judgment of Pallas Athena and her jury. This brings Aeschylus quite up to date, and comparable with Messrs. Frederick Lonsdale and Somerset Maugham. Lord and Lady Longford made of the famous trilogy a fast-moving play of mixed motives and of plain effect. The audience might have been a little vague as to who was who among those on the stage, and justifiably bewildered as to the cause of all the bloodshed, but Cassandra's prophecies would make them wise if they could have been heard at the first production. Greek drama would seem to be for sunny fields with mountains for backcloth, and within the shadow of ruinous buildings—there the proper effects might hope to be achieved.

Having dealt with the *Oresteia* Lord and Lady Longford passed to modern themes—Lord Longford to the Ireland of the 18th century and the baffling personality of Jonathan Swift. In his *Yahoo* he was a little over-anxious to portray his Swift as an Irish patriot, and while there is a convincing study of Swift the man that of the patriot is still elusive. The first act shows Swift and Mrs. Dingley in the Deanery at St. Patrick's. Swift is reading from a manuscript and Stella entertains him with her conversation; there is a visit from Berkeley and one from Vanessa; a letter from Vanessa to Swift; and the hurried



marriage of Swift and Stella by Berkeley. This is a finely effective opening, and had Lord Longford maintained its quality he would have added a masterpiece to the Irish drama. Unfortunately, in his second act he lapsed: The scene changes to Vanessa's house at Celbridge, to which Berkeley comes to prepare her for a visit from Swift and receives private papers for disposal. Vanessa is preparing for death and the tempestuous visit of Swift brings it appreciably nearer. The third act is again at the Deanery, to which Swift has returned from his delirious wandering, and is known as the author of "Drapier's Letters." Dublin Castle has a price on the head of the author who is known to the populace but not to the authorities. Berkeley pays another visit and is rebuffed in scathing terms; Stella pleads for wifely privileges; and the mob enters the Deanery to acclaim the man who had compelled the withdrawal of base coinage. With the entry of the mob the play tails off into inconsequence and incoherence, but discussion may rage about this third act, in which the events of to-day enter more largely than those of Swift's own time. The play would have been more convincing had Swift's swirling brain not been credited with prophetic vision, and been occupied instead with the fantastic creatures from "Gulliver's Travels." A fine climax was sacrificed to unnecessary satire.

Lady Longford presented a tragi-comedy said to be based upon an actual character whose doings have passed into the folklore of Westmeath. Studying from the life of one who was actually a 'character' in his time Lady Longford made an excellent comedy of wit and satire. Horatio Jiggins of Jigginstown, an eccentric with a taste for Oriental religions and a marked distaste for his fellow creatures, is used as a foil to the follies of contemporary life. Into his country home come a cousin from Kensington, the widowed mother of two children, whose husband had been a pro-consul and whose son had hopes of a post in Cyprus. This trio was frankly hopeful that Jigginstown would be left to its care and profit, and the feminine portion was prepared to adopt any measures to that end. On the spot, in an adjacent farm was another impecunious relation named Richard Wilson, who also had expectations about Jigginstown. Old Horatio heartily detested his relations from Kensington—all that they represented he loathed, their food, their reading, their talk, their crabbed respectability, and above all their snobbery. He cut their visit short, and instructed his butler to give the widow money to defray her expenses on her actual departure. Wilson's hopes were blighted by the trapped engagement to the girl from Kensington, through the leakage of his business deal to Horatio. His relations having failed him Horatio turned to the parson, with whom he discussed the possibility of leaving his wealth for the foundation of a school to teach the architecture of labourers' cottages. But only in his old butler did Horatio find the unselfish humanity he had come to value, and when his will came to be read it was found that the butler and the Ministry of Education, with the local Parish Priest, were the beneficiaries. The play is excellent comedy, with richly-contrasted characters and witty dialogue.

For his *Grania of the Ships* Mr. David Sears selected a tale of high adventure as the background of a drama of love and jealousy, and his play is in the true romantic tradition. The story of Grace O'Malley, "Grania of the Ships," is that of a woman who was part pirate and part patriot, who held her own against her compatriots as against the invading Normans. Inside the historical frame-



work Mr. Sears inserted with the utmost dexterity a tale of love and jealousy which is the very essence of stage romance. It is a tale of thrilling moments, with a truly happy ending which leaves Grace O'Malley and Richard Burke, after many vicissitudes and misunderstandings, silhouetted against the moon. In this play Mr. Sears pointed to a storehouse of dramatic material which awaits exploitation in the theatre, and for that he is to be heartily congratulated.

The slight *Storm Over Wicklow* shows Miss Mary Manning in a light satirical vein, but its little jests and gestures were disappointing from the author of *Youth's the Season*. Among the other plays presented by the Gate Theatre during the year were *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Sheridan's *St. Patrick's Day*, Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, Flecker's *Don Juan*, Mordaunt Shairp's *The Crime at Blossom's*, and a dramatised version of V. Blasco Ibanez's novel *Blood and Sand*. It was notable that none of the French plays promised in the late summer as part of the season's programme materialised, nor did *Othello* and Flecker's *Hassan*, which had also been announced for early presentation. There was, however, a very full season of reasonably good plays, all of which were most delightfully produced by Mr. Hilton Edwards and Mr. Michael MacLiammoir and thoroughly appreciated by the public.

# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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## SOME POINTS IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU.

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Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu is something more than a mere writer of "ghost stories." Present-day criticism finds in his work a more lasting quality than is allowed the average story-teller; the Rev. Montague Summers, who does not speak lightly on such matters, has styled him "the supreme master of the supernatural in fiction." Collectors on both sides of the Atlantic have begun to pay his first editions serious attention, and refuse to be deterred by the fact that some of them are extremely rare. Where collectors rush in, the bibliographer is bound to follow.

The bibliography of Le Fanu presents more difficulties than that of the average mid-Victorian author. The excessive rarity of some of his books in first editions constitutes a problem in itself; then there are the binding problems which almost invariably occur with authors of this period; and in two or three cases problems arise which are, of their kind, unique. A somewhat intensive study which I have made of Le Fanu's first editions has yielded some points which may interest the collector, and I will set these out as briefly as possible and in chronological order.

*The Cock and Anchor* (1845). This was published anonymously, by William Curry of Dublin, in three volumes in 1845, and was Le Fanu's first novel. The names of Longman of London and Fraser of Edinburgh also appear in the imprint. The problem here consists of the fact that the book appeared in two sizes, octavo and small octavo (the actual sizes are  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$  inches and  $5 \times 3\frac{7}{8}$  inches), the difference in size being accounted for by the "unleading" of the type. With regard to the question of priority of issue, it is natural to suppose that the normal octavo size of the three-volume novel of the period is the earlier. As to date, binding, pagination, etc., both editions are identical. This double form of publication appears to be unique in the history of the three-volume novel.

*The Fortunes of Colonel Torlogh O'Brien* (1847). This was first published by McGlashan, Dublin, in ten monthly parts in pink pictorial wrappers. In this state it is very rare. The volume issue which followed in the same year is found in two entirely different bindings; one is in dull-green cloth, with an elaborate interlacing design in gilt covering the whole of the surface of the spine, save one panel, which carries the title in gilt, printed from specially cut letters; the other is in a darker shade of green and has on the spine gilt figures of an Irish peasant and colleen dancing, with other peasants in caubeens, and a Cupid playing a harp. It is extremely difficult to decide which represents the earlier issue.

*Ghost Stories* (1851). This was published, in a small octavo, by McGlashan of Dublin, and was illustrated by "Phiz" with a frontispiece and three full-page engravings. It exists in three different bindings:—A. Red close-ribbed cloth, with a gilt design on the front cover of an owl sitting on a tombstone, with a gilt emblematical design on the spine. B. Red rough morocco cloth, with no gilt on sides and only plain gilt bands on the spine. C. Violet bead-grain cloth, with

a very elaborate gilt design on the front cover, with the title in the centre. This issue also differs from A and B in having gilt edges and white end-papers; the edges in the former are plain and the end-papers yellow. The order of priority would seem to be that which I have given.

*The House by the Churchyard* (1863). The bibliography of this book, published by Tinsley, London, in three volumes, in 1863, is so complicated that it would be useless to attempt to unravel it in the limited space at my disposal. It was printed and bound in Dublin (by whom it is impossible to discover), but transferred before publication to Tinsley, the author having taken objection to the inferior binding and printing. Tinsley "stripped" the book, recased it in a handsomely gilt bright green cloth binding and printed new titles. One copy, however, exists in the Irish binding of plain blue cloth and with the original cancelled titles; this is, of course, the rare first issue. The important and, so far, inexplicable, point to be remembered about this puzzling book is that it never carried a Dublin publisher's imprint; even in the first—Dublin-printed—issue the imprint found is that of Tinsley.

*The Prelude* (1865). This is a sixpenny pamphlet of sixteen pages dealing with a Dublin University election of the period. Le Fanu wrote it under the pseudonym of "John Figwood, Esq., Barrister-at-law." The size is octavo, and it was issued unbound.

*All In The Dark* (1866). Published by Bentley in three volumes in 1866. It is found in four bindings, of which the following would appear to be the order of priority. A. cream-coloured cloth, with title in gilt on spine (a special binding intended for presentation purposes; only a few copies were done). B. Similar to "A," save that the cloth is claret-coloured. C. Differs from "B" in that there is less ornamental blocking on the covers and that the edges are cut, making the book appreciably smaller. D. Two volumes in one, in a binding similar to that of "C." An obvious remainder.

*The Beautiful Poem of Shamus O'Brien* (1867). Published at Manchester by John Heywood, and probably unauthorised. It is a sixteen-page pamphlet, issued in flimsy orange wrappers. The published price was threepence. It is very rare.

*The Purcell Papers* (1880). Published by Bentley, London, in three volumes. The binding of the first edition shows no less than six variants:—A. Smooth blue-black cloth, with title in gilt on front cover and spine. B. Smooth dark-green cloth, with title in gilt on spine only. C. Smooth scarlet cloth, title in gilt on spine only. D. Coarse maroon cloth, title in gilt on spine only. E. Cheap-looking smooth maroon cloth, title in gilt on spine, all edges cut. F. Three volumes in one, royal blue cloth, lavishly gilt. G. Three volumes in one, rough-grained dark-brown cloth, with less gilt ornamentation than in the "F" issue.

The three Le Fanu volumes published by Downey, London, *The Watcher and Other Weird Stories* (1894), *The Evil Guest* (1895), and *A Chronicle of Golden Friars and Other Stories* (1896), are not first editions but reprints of material scattered through earlier volumes. *Madame Crowl's Ghost*, however, published by George Bell in 1923, and edited by Dr. M. R. James, contains twelve stories not previously collected.

For an excellent bibliographical hand-list of Le Fanu's works those who are interested may be referred to Mr. S. M. Ellis's *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and Others* (Constable, 1931); and for a very thorough explanation of some of the binding problems involved Mr. John Carter's *Binding Variants in English Publishing* (Constable, 1932) should be consulted.

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### BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES.

Messrs. Pickering & Chatto, Ltd., 1 King Street, London, S.W.1. A catalogue of English Poetry, 1680-1730. A most interesting list, with critical and bibliographical notes.

Mr. Bertram Rota, 14 Old Burlington Street, London, W.1. Mr. Rota celebrates his removal to new and larger premises by issuing a catalogue of Modern First Editions at "giving-away" prices.

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Messrs. Blackwell, 50-51 Broad Street, Oxford. A Catalogue of Books, secondhand and new, dealing with Modern History. Amongst the 1352 items offered are many indispensable books of reference.

William George & Sons, Ltd., 89 Park Street, Bristol. Catalogue No. 415. English Literature, Literary Criticism, and Shakespeariana.

The Swift's Head Bookshop, 5 Molesworth Street, Dublin. Catalogue No. 1. Books of Irish interest at moderate prices. Histories of Galway, Cork, Kerry, Belfast and Waterford, in fine condition, are amongst the desirable items offered in this short but attractive list.



## BOOK REVIEWS

### POE AND "THE NOBLEST OF HER SEX."

L'ETRANGE VIE ET ETRANGES AMOURS D'EDGAR POE. By Emile Lauvrière. Paris. 1934.

EDGAR ALLAN POE : étude psychoanalytique. By Marie Bonaparte (Princess George of Greece). Paris : Denoel et Steele. 1934.

EDGAR ALLAN POE AND THE PHILADELPHIA *Saturday Courier*. By John Grier Varner, Jnr., M.A. University of Virginia, U.S.A. 1934.

FLUSH, THE DIARY OF MRS. BROWNING'S DOG. By Virginia Woolf. London. 1933.

THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET : A PLAY. London. 1933.

There is no need to be alarmed. The list is formidable, but there is no intention here of *reviewing* all these books. They are lined up thus for two reasons, of which the first is to form a starting point towards an analysis of the relations between Poe and Elizabeth Barrett ; and the second, and very secondary, as comment on a phrase by an Irish author, Mr. Shane Leslie, who in a recent article on Baudelaire shouldered off Poe as "a forgotten sensationist." Sensationist or not, forgotten no man can be said to be who has three books published on his subject in the space of six months. I say three, for three have swum into my ken ; but surely an exploration of the publishing lists in all countries, including Japan, would yield more.

For students of Poe, Mr. Emile Lauvrière is an old acquaintance. He was the first to attempt a scientific biography of Poe, devoid alike of the sentimentalism of Mrs. Whitman and her kind, and also of the personal rancour of R. H. Stoddard and his kind. That was a long time ago. In his new book M. Lauvrière holds to his opinion of Poe, but instead of a dry scientific statement he gives us a highly coloured narrative in which are utilised some of the fairly recent discoveries about Poe's rather sorry love-affairs—if such they may be called, when it is evident that the poet was either seeking a comrade to fill the void of his immense loneliness (the case of Annie), or else money so as to have a little peace of mind and heart (the case of Helen Whitman, *née* Power).

M. Lauvrière's conclusion is about the same as it ever was—that Poe was mad ; only in his new book he props up this theory with some late fashions, drawn, it would seem, from psycho-analysis. This makes it the more strange that he should have held the press so as to add a fling at Princess Marie Bonaparte, whose book was published only a few months before his own. M. Lauvrière seems to be particularly annoyed (he pretends to be amused) that a *princess* should take a hand in the business. But why should not the book of a princess be as well worth reading as the book of a professor ?

In this case it happens that the princess has written the better book, more interesting at all points. Anecdotes of Poe's biography are not very useful at this time of day, and when such anecdotes are retailed by foreigners, English and Irish included, even if the details are right, they are given a wrong value. Only an American can write well about Poe's exterior life, and with that, not a new-fledged American, but one who by his family has the tradition of a hundred years ago.

The Americans of Poe's time never thought he was mad. In the North some of his peculiarities and his quarrelsome disposition were put down to the

fact that he was a Southerner and by consequence a fire-eater. If there be anything clear about Poe in the American records—and this remark I offer to the attention of both the Princess and of M. Lauvrière—it has nothing to do with sex or alcoholism or recondite matters of that kind, but simply with his readiness to start a fight. If anything stood in his way in life besides sheer bad luck, it was not drink, and certainly not women, but rather a native incapacity to see any point of view but his own and a propensity to quarrel with and insult those who ventured to differ. I have often wondered that Poe, who professed such a love of music, wrote about it in general and vague phrases only, although there was a considerable musical life in New York during the first decades of the last century. Some time ago I asked an historian of music in America whether his researches had brought him anything concerning Poe. He replied that all he had found was an account of an argument without amenity between a music critic of the time and Poe. "They had a fist-fight afterward," added my informant laconically.

Owing to poverty, the poet was always being surprised in situations unworthy of his genius. The poor poet is unarmoured: Don Quixote is the sorrowfullest figure under the stars. Speaks he with dignity, they laugh; if the prison walls or the workhouse pallet beat down his soul, why, quoth they, he ought to be glad he is not out in the rain. "It is a terrible thing," said Nietzsche, "for a man who has thought to dominate the world to find he has need of it." Poe had thought to dominate the world; his need of it took a sordid form fatal to illusion. Hence he lost his aureole in the gutter, as Baudelaire said; his wings trailed in the dust, as he said himself.

Princess Marie Bonaparte is a pupil of Freud, and considered one of his best pupils. Freud is said to have read the proofs of this book on Poe, so it may be taken as doctrine from the fountain-head. The author neglects incidents so dear to M. Lauvrière, and essays to wring their secret from terrible documents, such as *Berenice* (the teeth) and *The Case of M. Valdemar*. Her conclusion is not that Poe was mad, but that he had a congenital morbid taint arising from what they call the Œdipus complex—a longing for the mother-love he had been deprived of from birth. Once a few postulates allowed for, the book can be read with interest and profit, and is surely one that those interested in Poe ought to read. There is nothing better on the subject in French, and as a plausible explanation of Poe I can only recall as better W. Brownell's essay which few have read. Baudelaire's two essays, admirable as literature, are as to substance grotesque, so far are they from the kind of man Poe really was. Baudelaire thought he was a man like himself. But Poe was not in the least like any Frenchman; he was, as I have often said, the most American of the early writers except Walt Whitman and Mark Twain.

With Baudelaire's translation in their literature the French claim a proprietary right to Poe. One who picks up a cat thrown out of doors by its owners sometimes cherishes the cat the more for that. The apparition of these two books on Poe, and also of some others, among which should be mentioned *L'Influence en France d'Edgar Poe*, by Léon Lemonnier, who is the only Frenchman who has examined Poe from the comparative and technical side, has produced a crop of articles in which is repeated the opinion started by Baudelaire, and enforced by Mallarmé, Rollinat and all the Symbolists, that Poe, born in America, was really the anti-American, and was accordingly crucified by the Americans.

Were there room here, it could quite easily be shewn that Poe laid down some of the main lines of the American activity as we see it to-day—and not at all the most admirable in their effects. That Poe got a bad deal in America is certain, and is also inexplicable, for the old America, composed in greatest part of the English language races, treated its writers pretty well. The cause of Poe's failure might be looked for in the fact that he never put a seal on his lips or on his pen; but it might also, I think, be ascribed to politics—a view that has never been considered or adequately examined. I propose it to some of the young bloods of the old University of William and Mary, who may perchance lack subjects for polemic.

The book which comes from that University, where Poe is treated as Dante or Goethe in the universities of their native lands, is what is called "a collector's item." Mr. Varner, Instructor in English at the University, has explored the old files of the *Philadelphia Courier*. He says: "The probability is that Poe, living obscurely and desperately pressed for funds, submitted five tales in competition for a premium of \$100 offered by the *Courier*. . . . These tales brought neither fame nor fortune to the struggling author, for the prize was awarded to Delia Bacon for her story, "Love's Martyr."

*Plus ça change . . . .*

\* \* \* \*

With Poe it is frequently—perhaps oftenest—very hard to get the impression that he is expressing his real self. That baffles and should daunt investigators. When he is attacking some contemporary he seems at his sincerest; and in *Ulalume*, *The Conqueror Worm*, the beautiful *Valley of Unrest*. But when you find him writing: "He was that *monstrum horrendum*, a man of genius without principles," you feel somehow that all that should be in quotation marks—something that Lytton might have said, and perhaps at his glossiest did say, or Coleridge in the course of some nebulous lecture, when what he was saying was so far off from where he was standing—anyhow, lifted out of some number of *Blackwood*, coming much more from there than from the deep conviction of E. A. Poe.

The defect of much of the writing about Poe, not only French, is that Poe is not situated in his time. Now he was a man of his time if ever there was one, sensitive to all its vibrations. D. H. Lawrence's scoff at his theatrical scenery loses much of its point if Poe is placed in relation to Disraeli, Lytton, Monk Lewis, and also Byron. Two years ago I wrote in the *Mercure de France* that Poe's decorative style, and also a kind of comic which he sometimes tried, came from De Quincey. Other influences were Dickens, Coleridge, and Elizabeth Barrett.

Here I have only time to speak of Miss Barrett. Who that has ever come under the spell of Poe has forgotten the trumpeting Dedication of the volume of 1845: "To the noblest of her sex, to Elizabeth Barrett of England." Of England! How splendid! One of those odd fanatics that Poe has always raised in his track (there is another of precisely the same kind in Paris at this moment, and did not Mallarmé say to me that Poe had been *le dieu de sa jeunesse*), after writing and publishing all he could on the subject, without in truth adding anything considerable to our knowledge, for he was in a government office in London,



had never been as far as even New York, and was obliged to rely on the yarns of drifting Americans, mostly female, who at the time he wrote could claim with some appearance of veracity to have personal knowledge of the poet—well, this excellent Mr. John H. Ingram, having run totally dry as to his saint, addressed his attention to Mrs. Browning, feeling that in doing this he was not going outside the sanctuary. But he prepared his little book without the advantage of Sir Frederick Kenyon's edition of Mrs. Browning's letters, which he could not have read without some misgivings as to whether after all the poetess merited his devotion in so far as it sprung from her relations with Poe. In the two thick volumes there is but one mention of Poe. It runs thus:—

"To-day Mr. Poe sent me a volume containing his poems and tales collected, so now I *must* write and thank him for his dedication. What is to be said, I wonder, when a man calls you the 'noblest of your sex'? 'Sir, you are the most discerning of yours.'"

This is dated by the editor: March or April, 1845. I know nothing about Poe's bibliography, and cannot say whether a volume of his poems and tales bound up together appeared early in 1845. It does not seem to agree with his way of publishing his poems. But Elizabeth Barrett had apparently received some time before the volume entitled "The Raven, and other Poems," which contained the famous dedication. This volume is dated 1845, and it certainly appeared that year, for Margaret Fuller reviewed it in the *New York Tribune* shortly after its publication. Perhaps Poe had sent Miss Barrett the dedication before the book? Perhaps the book of Tales and Poems she mentions was an earlier publication which Poe sent *after* he had sent his "Raven" volume?

Anyhow, she had received the "Raven" volume with the dedication some time before she wrote the letter just quoted. She had not acknowledged it, and the tone of the letter implies that she had been dissuaded from taking any notice of the gift. By whom? This was before her marriage, at a time when she never stirred from her bedroom. She saw very few people, and nobody who can be imagined to have had a grudge against Poe. America was much farther from London then than now, and yarns detrimental to Poe, such as were current in New York and Philadelphia, were not likely to reach Miss Barrett on her couch in Wimpole Street. Still, the fact remains that although she was very punctual in her thanks for any kind of attention, Poe she had evidently neglected till she got a second reminder of his existence. She then wrote the letter which is in all the Poe biographies containing the well-known phrases about "the power which is felt," about her friend who has a bust of Pallas, and ending with a mention of "our great poet, Mr. Robert Browning." In fact, just at that moment she was in the first flush of her love for Browning (they were to make their run-away marriage a little later), and she had not much room left for Poe or any other man.

From there on she seems never to have given another thought to Poe. This in itself would not be extraordinary—perhaps, like Dickens, she regarded Poe as a man of not much importance—were it not that she corresponded with other Americans whom also she knew only by letters in a fashion much more cordial. There was one Cornelius Mathews. He was a versifier, hopelessly forgotten to-day, and sub-editor of the *Democratic Review*, of which the editor was a relation of my own. These people had not a friendly attitude to Poe nor he to them. In



one of his letters he calls the future minister to Portugal "that ass O'Sullivan." Elizabeth Barrett wrote much longer and friendlier letters to Mathews than she ever wrote to Poe.

Later, in Florence, she knew a small group of Americans, the Storys, the Hawthornes, and above all Margaret Fuller, who could have told her about Poe if she had shewn any interest in him. Perhaps she did; but so far as I know, there is no record that she did. In the few years he had left to live after her letter to him, Poe issued one other book, *Eureka*, which apparently he did not send her. The Americans she saw in Florence and Rome would not be likely to give her a favourable opinion of Poe, who was then in a tunnel from which he did not really emerge till Mallarmé and the French Symbolists made him one of their heroes. Particularly, Margaret Fuller, as a New-York journalist, knew a great deal about Poe and could hardly have given a favourable account of a man who had shewn no respect for her in print, or, they say, out of it. But, as it happens, Mrs. Browning, who accepted most people, did not care much for Margaret Fuller, one of the two figures (the other being Landor) for whom she could not get up any sympathy, though in Fuller's case she tried. Margaret Fuller, in the best style of the newspaper-story writer who invents what she does not know, told Mrs. Browning, who adored Balzac, that she did not see Balzac in Paris "because he went into the world scarcely at all, frequenting the lowest cafés, so that it was difficult to track him out." "Which information I receive doubtingly," is Mrs. Browning's sage comment. "Besides, I never entertain disparaging thoughts of my demi-gods unless they should be forced on me by evidence." Poe was not one of her demi-gods, but it is quite plain from the foregoing that she would not have paid much attention to what Margaret Fuller might say against him.

So the idyll rested on "the noblest of her sex"—a phrase not thrown away on Elizabeth Barrett, one of the most delightful persons who have ever existed. The phrase itself Poe may have found in an article which De Quincey published in *Tait's Magazine* in 1837, where it is applied to Mary Wolstonecraft, the wife of William Godwin:—"What a woman! the sole rival in this country of the noblest of her sex, Madame Roland." Because of his admiration for "Caleb Williams" Poe would have read attentively an article by "The Opium-Eater" on Godwin. But the compliment is equally merited by Elizabeth Barrett, who in her little way did also her best to lighten the burthen of the unfortunate. Perhaps, as has been said, it was her residence on the Continent which gave her a grace of motion and breadth of view which most of her contemporaries lacked. She and Dickens are the only two writers of the Victorian era who really liked the French and understood them. She was not so great a poet as her husband; she never thought it; but more intelligent she certainly was. She had not George Eliot's conviction that she was responsible for the conduct of the world; she had too much humour for that; and yet "The Cry of the Children" probably did more good than any other social-sentimental document of the time. She accepted people as they came, trying to see their plausible side. She even accepted her father.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN.

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COLLECTED POEMS OF W. B. YEATS. Macmillan & Co. 10s. 6d.

No modern poet writing in English has developed so continuously as William Butler Yeats. Again and again he has discovered new material and new idiom: Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne did not do this. From the poems that recall the Irish countryside, such as "Down by the Sally Gardens" and "An Isle in the Water," he passed to poems which carry over to English the discoveries of the French symbolists—the poems in "The Wind Amongst the Reeds"; he discovered a new material and a new idiom when he passed from such esoteric verse to the bare lyricism of later years when he came to say:—

"I made my song a coat  
Covered with embroideries  
Out of old mythologies  
From heel to throat;  
But the fools caught it,  
Wore it in the world's eyes  
As though they'd wrought it.  
Song, let them take it,  
For there's more enterprise  
In going naked."

At each period of his development this poet has achieved memorable beauty: the beauty of the first part of "The Wanderings of Oisín," and of such poems as "The Lake Island of Innisfree" is different from "He Gives his Beloved Certain Rhymes," which are different from "The Folly of Being Comforted," and these again are different from the bare poems in "The Green Helmet," such as "Peace," and "A Woman Homer Sung," which again are different from those poems of impassioned mentality in his recent work, such as those magnificent pieces, "I saw a staring Virgin stand" and "Sailing to Byzantium."

Still this assembly of poems written during forty years have unity, the unity that an integral, developing mind gives them, a mind that has never departed from a fundamental conception. In one of his very latest poems he has written:—

"Things out of perfection sail,  
And all their swelling canvas wear,  
Nor shall the self-begotten fail,  
Though fantastic men suppose  
Building yard and stormy shore,  
Winding-sheet and swaddling clothes.

And he had said in one of his very early poems:—

"Who dreams that beauty passes like a dream?"

He refuses to believe that mutation can be anything more than an illusion that man has made up "lock, stock, and barrel out of his bitter soul," and takes his stand with Berkeley (but would the philosophic bishop stand over the poet's

interpretation of his denial of anything else except ideas in the mind of God and the perceiving spirit ?) :—

“ And God-appointed Berkeley that proved all things a dream,  
That this pragmatism, preposterous pig of a world, its farrow that so  
solid seem,  
Must vanish on the instant if the mind but change its theme.”

His philosophy is of Being and not of Becoming, and unlike another great poet, Paul Valéry, he would delight in Zeno's paradoxes—that the arrow is every instant at rest and that Achilles can never catch up with the tortoise. But there remains the question that the poet must ask and that the philosopher can do no more than talk around :—

“ Why should the faithfulest heart most love  
The bitter sweetness of false faces ?  
Why must the lasting love what passes ?  
Why are the gods by men betrayed ?

The men of faith could give him an answer, but that answer he is not willing to receive :—

“ Must we part, Von Hugel, though much alike, for we  
Accept the miracles of the saints and honor sanctity ?

Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.  
The lion and the honeycomb, what has the Scripture said ?  
So get you gone, Von Hugel, though with blessings on your head.

William Butler Yeats is a poet who got a second wind, and with his collected poems before us we can recognise the place at which he got this second wind. He was a poet of the eighteen and nineties, the very best of them, doubtless, and he passed days and nights with writers for whom all roads led to Paris. He might have gone on making variations on “ The Wind amongst the Reeds,” and we see now that this collection marked a dead-end. But he came back to Ireland and founded a theatre in Dublin. That theatre went a great way towards forming the Irish literature—not the plays alone, but the poetry and the novels—of the last thirty years. It formed William Butler Yeats too. It gave him a new approach to poetry and it gave him a new idiom—the words of ordinary speech, the rhythm of ordinary speech ; it gave him new companions, new interests. The collection that follows the “ Wind Amongst the Reeds,” the collection published when he was on the threshold of the theatre, “ The Seven Woods,” marks a turning point. The Yeats of “ The Wind Amongst the Reeds ” is here, albeit more mature, less dream-obsessed, but still there is not much difference between the poet of :—

“ The Powers whose name and shape no living creature knows  
Have pulled the immortal Rose,  
And though the Seven Lights bowed in their dance and wept,  
The Polar Dragon slept.”

and the poet of

"Michael will unhook his trumpet  
From a bough overhead  
And blow a little noise  
When the supper has been spread."

But the one who begins—

"If any man drew near  
When I was young,  
I thought, "He holds her dear,"  
And shook with hate and fear."

is making a new start. This poet of "The Green Helmet" and "Responsibilities" has learned in the theatre how to make poetry with direct speech and direct rhythm with everything fabulous left aside. A fresh poetic product begins here. He will always be direct in his rhythm and his speech, but with this directness he will attain to a strange, clear music that goes with a vision of some actual scene:—

"Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven."

or—

"The trees are in their autumn beauty,  
The woodland paths are dry."

His more recent poems are built up on an impassioned meditation, but their forms are more dramatic than meditative. "Sailing to Byzantium" is amongst these; it is, I am certain, the greatest short poem of our time.

What treasure there is in this volume! There is the tapestried beauty of "The Wanderings of Oisín," the statuesque beauty of "The Old Age of Queen Maeve" and "The Two Kings," and the thin, bright, flowing colour of "Baile and Aillinn," to mention the narrative poems only. There is the range from the youthful mood when "the shadowy hazel grove Where mouse-grey waters are flowing Threaten the head that I love" to the profound compassion that comes with the realization that what threatens and triumphs at every moment is inevitable mortality. There is the range from the charm of the country girl who "brings in the dishes and lays them in a row" to the delight in an abstract art and a comprehensive philosophy that is to redeem man from mortality—"the monuments of unfading intellect." These poems have their beginning in Arcady and the Ireland of local legends where children are stolen by fairies and they end in Byzantium, where all is ceremony and abstraction and where the poet can survey the whole of human achievement:—

"At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit  
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,  
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,  
Where blood-begotten spirits come  
And all complexities of fury leave,  
Dying into a dance,  
An agony of trance,  
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve."



It is a return: the poet was always a Byzantine—strayed, like El Greco, into the western world. Or rather, let us say, that like the Edgar Allan Poe of Mallarmé's sonnet, these poems reveal how the poet is being moulded in what is essentially himself—*Tel qu'en Lui-même enfin l'éternité le change!*

Of interest in this collection are the revisions of the early poems which have recently been made. This poet has always been a revisionist, and we have often had to be grateful for the laborious artistry which has gone to make a finer crystalization in lines of certain of the earlier poems. Now that I compare certain altered lines with lines that I have remembered I am for applauding sometimes and sometimes for protesting. Of the shorter poems the one that has been most thoroughly revised is the "Dedication of a Book of Stories selected from the Irish Novelists." The revision was made during the internal conflict of 1922-23, and the bitterness that comes into certain of the verses is to the good—it gives the poem a new strength; it makes it more personal. Another short poem of the same period, "The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner," revised under the same influence, has so little relation to the early poem of the same title that I think the two should be printed in different sections of the volume. And I ask, why should such lines as "O beast of the wilderness, bird of the air, Must I endure your amorous cries?" be intruded into an unearthly poem that has for its title, "He thinks of his Past Greatness when a Part of the Constellations of Heaven"?—the original lines were fitting—"Though bird and rush cry their pitiful cries." The version of "The Shadowy Waters" given here is a changling; the beautiful original has been stolen by some wicked fairy, and this odd thing has been substituted.

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### THE MAN IN THE YOUTH

LETTERS TO THE NEW ISLAND. By W. B. Yeats. Edited with an Introduction by Horace Reynolds. Cambridge, Mass.: The Harvard University Press. London: Humphry Milford. (Oxford University Press).

If *Letters to the New Island* were published anonymously, we should have had an interesting time guessing what had been the career of the young writer. Mailed forty odd years ago, they were addressed to *The Providence Journal* and *The Boston Pilot*, letters on literary topics. The writer is youthfully eager-minded and very understanding; he is close to literary happenings in London and is an Irish partisan. Now and again a phrase makes us feel that we would not be surprised to hear that he has developed as a poet. Distinctly a young man of judgment. But when he writes about Irish literary projects we sense something more than good judgment—there is discovery here and what belongs to all genuine discoverers—a seer-like quality. Well, in the course of forty years this eager-minded young man became a celebrated poet, a winner of the Nobel Prize, founder of a national theatre, the developer of themes from folk-lore, and a Senator of the Irish Free State. The writer of these forty-years old literary columns, which his present editor entitles *Letters to the New Island*, is William Butler Yeats.

The recurring theme of these letters is the necessity for turning from what is cosmopolitan to what is national and traditional. The young poet living in

London realizes that the English have cut themselves off from their folk-tradition through urbanisation, while the Irish, although absorbed in a political conflict and with unformed literary standards, have a folk and heroic tradition out of which might come a new and stirring literary movement. In the first printed in this collection he notes that T. W. Rolleston had just translated Walt Whitman into German. "I wish he would devote his imagination to some national purpose," the young letter-writer observes. "Cosmopolitan literature is, at best, but a poor bubble, though a big one. Creative work has always a fatherland." He himself had written of the Indian Golden Age and about Arcadian shepherds, but he had turned to local legends and to the traditional body of romance, which he was to shape into *The Wanderings of Oisín*. He had friends in Ireland who represented heroic life for him; there was John O'Leary. "One thinks of him now sitting among his books in his house at Drumcondra," and one feels that this presence gives him hope and courage. "Whenever an Irish writer has strayed away from Irish themes and Irish feelings, in almost all cases he has done no more than make alms for oblivion." He was eager to unite to his interest in folk-lore and his project for the foundation of a modern Irish literature a philosophy which appealed to him. "With Irish literature and Irish thought alone I have to do," he writes, "and yet the doctrines I have just been studying in Peter's jewelled paragraphs—the Platonic theory of spiritual beings having their abode in all things without and within us, and thus uniting all things as by a living ladder of souls with God Himself—have some relation to the very matter of Irish thought that brings me to Ireland just now." In the National Library he notes that the only people reading are students who are cramming for some examination. "Can we find a remedy?" he demands. "Can we not unite literature to the great passion of patriotism and ennoble both thereby?" As a matter of history this young inquirer went a long way towards uniting literature and patriotism and bringing a new impulse to the students who read in the reading-room which Joyce was to describe in *Portrait of the Artist* and *Ulysses*. "And if history and the living present fails us," he exclaims, "do there not lie hid among the spear-heads and golden collars over the way in the New Museum suggestions of that age before history when the art, legends and wild mythology of the earliest Ireland rose out of the void? There alone is enough of the stuff that dreams are made on to keep us busy a thousand years."

The literary philosophy of this very comprehending young poet is given in the best written of these papers, "The Poet of Ballyshannon":—

"To fully understand these poems one needs to have been born and bred in one of those Western Irish towns; to remember how it was the centre of your world, how the mountains and the river and the roads became a portion of your life forever; to have loved with a sense of possession even the roadside bushes where the roadside cottagers hung their clothes to dry. That sense of possession was the very centre of the matter. Elsewhere you are only a passer-by, for everything is owned by so many that it is owned by no one."

Still, the poet of Ballyshannon, William Allingham, was for all his singing of a place where one could have that necessary sense of possession, a minor poet. And why had he only this rank? With much insight the young Yeats

discovers the reason for us. He did not take his peasants quite seriously, for one thing. And he made no record of the passions that stirred in the place he celebrated :—

“ A wild west coast, a little Town,  
Where little Folk go up and down.”

What he recorded was a jumble of old memories. “ Memories, be it noticed, of things and moments, more than of passions and persons.” And then the young poet goes on to prophesy of a literature that he and several of his contemporaries and successors have brought into being :—

“ To the greater poets everything they see has its relation to the national life, and through that to the universal and divine life ; nothing is an isolated artistic moment ; there is unity everywhere ; everything fulfils a purpose that is not its own ; the hailstone is a journeyman of God ; the grass blade carries the universe upon its point. But to this universalism, this seeing of unity everywhere, you can only attain through what is near you, your nation, or, if you be no traveller, your village and the cobwebs on your walls. You can no more have the greater poetry without a nation than religion without symbols. One can only reach out to the universe with a gloved hand—that glove is one’s nation, the only thing one knows even a little of.”

One has to be grateful to Professor Reynolds and the Harvard University Press for bringing out papers that have such interest—interest not only because they deal with the origins of a literary movement and the early reflections of a man of genius, but of present interest—interest to those of us who have to be reminded that local life seen in some comprehensive way is the foundation of every national literature. And there is a spontaneity about them that makes these papers delightful. Afterwards William Butler Yeats lost this spontaneity in his search for a deliberate prose style, and his later essays have self-consciousness and some affectation.

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THE FABLES OF JEAN DE LA FONTAINE. Translated into English Verse by Edward Marsh, with Twelve Reproductions from Engravings by Stephen Gooden. Pp. lxxii+469. London : William Heinemann, Ltd. 1933. 10s. 6d. net.

A publisher deserves great praise who reduces an eight guinea book to ten shillings and sixpence. This volume is a marvel of cheapness and of beauty. Messrs. Heinemann have spared no pains to make it attractive. Even if the translation were not so superlatively good as it was, the plates by Mr. Gooden would be worth more than the price of the book. Mr. Gooden has, doubtless, his mannerisms ; his figures tend to the precious, his animals to the heraldic, and his unobtrusive backgrounds are rather formal. But that does not detract in the least from his merits : it is a real tribute to La Fontaine that Mr. Gooden should have deemed him worthy of illustration.

Mr. Edward Marsh has succeeded where so many (if not all) have failed. His "tour de force" is also a masterpiece of precise, concise and idiomatic rendering. Wherever I have tested the translation (with very few exceptions) accuracy vies with felicity.

I could wish that he had in every case followed the metre of the original, not slavishly, but to the extent of admitting to the translation of each fable only metres found in that fable. We may admit that the alexandrine offers a difficulty at the outset. It is the commonest French line, but not the commonest English. Mr. Marsh has chosen (with only an odd exception or two) to render it by the decasyllabic line in English. Perhaps he is right: the alexandrine is never quite at home in English. But then how is he to render the French decasyllable? He has in general chosen the octosyllable (I 19, VI 6). This choice makes a difficulty in the rendering of the French octosyllable. Sometimes Mr. Marsh renders it by the octosyllable in English, sometimes by a mixture of octosyllables and heptasyllables (IV 1). The heptasyllable is rendered sometimes by eights and sevens mixed (II 1), and sometimes (very happily) by sevens alone (VIII 20).

No distinction is made between the alexandrine and the decasyllable in the rendering of II 18, VII 10, VIII 18, X 12, etc. Both became decasyllables in English. This is a pity. In II 18, VIII 13, etc., Mr. Marsh introduces hexasyllables not found in the French. I can almost pardon him his gratuitous sixes in X 12:—

"Or in some forest deep  
My footsteps I shall keep.

In VII 10 two alexandrines are introduced into the English rendering; and although there seems little purpose in singling out two lines for this special treatment, one of them being in French an octosyllable:—

"Founded on the events of this unlucky day . . .  
Down goes the milk: adieu, cow, calf, pig, hens, and cocks . . ."

I like Mr. Marsh's notes. They are few and intelligent, and often witty. He should not, however, call La Fontaine's mixture of various metres "vers libres." La Fontaine knew nothing of "vers libres," and would have abhorred them.

Mr. Marsh asserts that III 1 and IV 18 are the only fables in regular alexandrine couplets. IV 18 is not entirely in regular couplets. If we include IV 18, we may as well include V 12 and VIII 5, which, though not in couplets, are entirely in alexandrines. I like Mr. Marsh's topical allusions. But isn't it rather hard on Shropshire and on Knighton (which alas! isn't in Shropshire, but in Radnorshire!) to be used to convey a sense of the back of beyondness of Quimper-Corentin:—

"In darkest Shropshire, near the town of Knighton . . . ."

In II 20, "drinking-houses" is a mistranslation. What does "hatches them deedily" (*faisait triple couvée*) (VII 10) mean? Does "Dan Porker" (VIII 12) give the exact dig of *Dom Porceau*? In VIII 21, "A Scotsman and a half" misses the double point of La Fontaine's "le Normand et demi," a *normand* (coin)



and a half being equivalent to a *manceau* (coin). In IV 16 the Picard is rendered very happily into Scots:—

“ Guid Wolves, a mither disna mean  
A’ that she clacks to flyte her wean.”

but with a mistake in O.F. grammar, because *Biaux chires Leups* is nominative singular! In VII 10 *disait son bréviaire* does not mean “told his beads.” In IV 4 I think Mr. Marsh has missed the point of *peu de jasmin d’Espagne*. He renders—

“ . . . . a specimen  
or two of Spanish Jessemin,”

but the French (in the context) means that there was none at all of this rare “recent introduction” (as the florists say).

In IV 4 the lines—

“ Goodbye to pot and bed and frame,  
Goodbye to leek and marjoram,”

do not render accurately

“ *Adieu planches, carreaux ;  
Adieu chicorée et porreaux.*”

Frames are not mentioned, nor pots. *Chicorée* is what we (wrongly) call “endive.”

I cannot accept the suggestion on p. 292 that the two Pigeons of IX 2 were male and female. If *pigeon* has no feminine, La Fontaine could have used *palombe*. In III 72, *galeries* is misrendered or rather insufficiently rendered (connected with *galant, régaler, se régaler*).

In I 21, “Hadn’t he licked the bear enough,” while quite literal, means nothing in English.

An *interlocutoire* is not a “deed-poll.” Why in IV 19 does Mr. Marsh translate *par bénéfice d’inventaire* by “with mental reservations,” when he admits himself that this is an incorrect rendering?

These are very small points. To them I would add the use of an excessive number of eye-rimes (this was perhaps unavoidable) and an excessive number of double rimes, some of which are also only eye-rimes (XII 4):—

“ . . . Tall rock, or scarp that breaks in precipices,  
The light-foot ladies vent their gay caprices.”

Occasionally gratuitous words are introduced into the translation not required by the original, such as a whole line in I 5:—

“ Just fancy, no fixed meals, no fire, no bed . . . ”

or “presses” and “herd and flock” in II 20 (one a gift, the other a duplication!) or (still worse, because nonsensical) the addition of “men” in VII 7:—

“ It was a charnel house of beasts and men.”

Occasionally, too, a lapse into infelicity occurs, as *e.g.*,

“ He met a mastiff, a tremendous swell.”

(*aussi puissant que beau*) (I 5).

But set against these small lapses the extraordinary felicity of the bulk of the translation, and we cannot but congratulate the translator and the publisher (and La Fontaine himself on his good fortune!).

Here are a few examples:—

"I aim (perhaps my butts will twig?)  
At Babblers, Pharisee and Prig." (I 19).

"Helens enough, bright-feathered and bright-eyed,  
Smiled on the conqueror: the loser fled . . ." (VII 13).  
(although "bright-eyed" is gratuitous).

"A citizen of Aberdeen . . ." (VIII 21).

"A cony-catcher, Marlin taught,  
Will sometimes prove a cony caught." (IV 11).

"Drs. Grave and Gay" (for *Tant-pis* and *Tant-mieux*). (V 12).

"Dame Carp and Gossip Luce . . ." (VII 4).

"Consul, the Learned Chimpanzee." (VII 17).

"And carried them like *Glass with Care*." (II 10).

"Toys with her tucker, clips her waist." (IV 4).

(Though shortly before in this fable we are presented with a line not in the original—

"Let's have a look at you—h'm quite a beauty.")

"I know of many nearer home  
Who muddle Surbiton with Rome,  
And cheerfully lay down the law  
On places which they never saw." (IV 7).

"'Tis thus the wise when faction threatens  
Will sport reversible rosettes . . ." (II 5).

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.

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GOD AND THE ASTRONOMERS. By W. R. Inge. Pp. xiv+308. Longmans. 12s. 6d. net.

In this volume, which contains the Waterburton Lectures of 1931-1933, Dean Inge discusses the scientific view that the universe is slowly running down to dissolution, and its significance in modern philosophy and theology.

"We have a long lease, it is true, but no freehold of this planet. The lords of creation half a million years hence may be our lineal descendants or they may not; they may be supermen or submen, or not men of any kind. And at last the race will die, and no memory of its history will survive anywhere."

In a chapter appropriately entitled "The New *Götterdämmerung*," Dr. Inge examines the various attitudes that may be adopted towards the fate of the universe as predicted by thermodynamics. Thus we may adopt the "naive deistic doctrine that some billions of years ago God wound up the material universe, and has left it to run down of itself ever since." There appears to him to be no logical escape from this conclusion; only, in the words of Eddington, "it suffers from the drawback that it is incredible!"

Or, perhaps, we may happen to be living during the expanding phase of what is really a pulsating cosmos. When it has dissolved into chaotic radiation, chance may aggregate it together once more. Or we may regard the fact of life as being more important than the circumstances of life, and look to the organising principle that maintains the individual, to provide a way of escape. Or we may take refuge in subjective idealism, and refuse to accept the absolute validity of the laws at present known to science.

None of the suggested remedies satisfies him. The universe is doomed. It will run down, collapse and disintegrate into nothingness, when, in the words of Balfour :—

"The uneasy consciousness which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. Imperishable monuments and immortal deeds, death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that *is* be better or worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect."

But when the universe runs down, all things will come to rest, there will be no more change, and time itself will end. This raises a vast issue. If time and the universe end together, does it not follow that they also began together. As a Platonist, Dr. Inge is quite prepared to accept this, and he quotes a famous passage from the *Timæus* in which Plato says "Time came into being with the universe, and if there shall ever be a dissolution of them they will be dissolved together." This conclusion, however, is utterly at variance with those thinkers who, like Croce, Gentile, Bergson and Alexander, hold that God is bound up with His creation. "His fortunes are entangled with those of the Cosmos, which is merely the externalisation of Himself." For such teachers there is a gloomy future :—

"If God is conceived of as a Being wholly immanent in the world, the acceptance of entropy as a universal law leaves His origin inexplicable and His doom certain. But a God to whom the world is as necessary as He is to the world can hardly be regarded as divine unless the world is everlasting. A God under sentence of death, at however distant a date, does not possess the attributes which religion holds to belong to the idea of God."

In two chapters, entitled, respectively, "The World of Values" and "The Eternal World," Dr. Inge has given a lucid and penetrating exposition of the idea of Value, which now dominates philosophy. The appreciation of value, he regards "as integral a part of our experience as the judgments which are

based on sense-perception . . . and must be accepted among the data upon which our view of reality must be founded." Indeed, in the ultimate, value and reality are identical. For his main attack Dr. Inge avails himself of the now famous second law of thermodynamics, which states that the available energy of the universe is gradually being dissipated as entropy. Or, to transcribe a passage from *The Invisible Universe*, 1875 :—

In other words, the tendency of heat is towards equalisation ; heat is *par excellence* the communist of our universe, and it will no doubt ultimately bring the system to an end. . . . It is absolutely certain that life, so far as it is physical, depends essentially upon transformations of energy ; it is also absolutely certain that age after age the possibility of such transformations is becoming less and less . . . . Our modern knowledge enables us to look back. We have thus reached the beginning as well as the end of the present visible universe, and have come to the conclusion that it began in time and will in time come to an end. Immortality is therefore impossible in such a universe."

In the sixty years that have elapsed, writers of popular scientific works have familiarised most people with the principle of increasing entropy, and have exalted it to a supreme position among the cosmic laws. For example, to quote Eddington, whose writings have had much influence on Dr. Inge :—

" There are other laws which we have strong reason to believe in, and we feel that a hypothesis which violates them is highly improbable ; but the improbability is vague and does not confront us as a paralysing array of figures, whereas the chance against a breach of the second law can be stated in figures which are overwhelming."

Now, the progress of modern physics is so great and so revolutionary that it seems unsafe to generalise from laws that at the moment are under re-investigation. If, for example, there is a break-down of the first law of thermodynamics, which postulates the conservation of energy, the second law will be involved also. In the words of a young physicist : " The laws of physics as we now know them cannot have operated for an infinity of time." Inge's argument is based on the assumption that they have thus operated, and will continue to do so in the future.

Apart from this negative criticism, *God and the Astronomers* is an important work of constructive exposition. The author has extricated his world of values from the confused tangle of temporal affairs. As for the fate of the material universe, " it is not a vital question for religion." In philosophy it is important, because if the law of entropy be true, " some philosophies are in ruins."

" The Great Tradition in Philosophy has always conceived of the spiritual world, the highest reality, as non-spatial and non-temporal. It follows that the solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside Space and Time."

Whether the eternal mode of existence can be modified in any real way by happenings in Time is a question yet to be answered.

W. R. F.

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THE DRAMA OF WEATHER. By Sir Napier Shaw. Pp. XIV + 269. (Cambridge: At the University Press. 1933. 7s. 6d. net.

Considering the importance attached, naturally enough, by the man in the street to the topic of climate and the weather, he betrays perhaps, a disproportionate lack of understanding of the underlying physical phenomena, strongly though these may effect his comfort and well-being. No item in our wireless programmes is more attentively listened to than the weather forecast, which commences invariably with statements as to the position and movements of anticyclones, deep depressions or wedges of high pressure, as the case may be. But these technical terms are probably, for a large majority of listeners, merely associated with the immediate expectation of useful information as to the prospect of good or bad weather for the ensuing forty-eight hours rather than with the actual physical conditions they indicate.

In "The Drama of Weather" by the distinguished and veteran meteorologist, Sir Napier Shaw, we have a book which should go far to awaken interest on the part of the general reader in a topic, which, in the form presented by the Meteorological Office reports and maps appearing in the daily press, may seem to many rather dry and obscure.

The author writes in his well-known crisp and breezy style and this little book is, moreover, easily comprehensible to readers with only a slight knowledge of physics. In the opening chapter entitled "Pageantry in the Sky" he gives several striking and beautiful photographs of cloud effects and other meteorological phenomena. This is followed by a sketch of the historical development of the subject together with some ancient weather lore, this latter often amounting to little more than mere superstition. Coming to recent times the author describes some modern recording instruments, also some curious weather toys. The vast number of telegraphic reports collected several times daily, not only from home observatories and stations, but with international collaboration from areas of continental extent, and which are required for the compilation of the daily charts and forecasts may come as a surprise to many readers. It appears that one year's observations for the British Meteorological Office alone occupy some 4,600 large pages.

"The sequence of events in the weather's arena" is admirably and clearly shown by numerous diagrams displaying, with no little ingenuity, daily and seasonable variations, as well as those due to geographical position. In his final chapter on weather maps and forecasts, Sir Napier Shaw introduces us to what he describes as "The Norwegian Duet for Polar and Tropical Air with Cyclonic Accompaniment." This refers to a development that has taken place since the war, resulting from the work and ideas of Prof. V. Bjerknes, of Norway, and his colleagues, and entailing an altogether different method of presenting the weather map. Two maps for comparison issued respectively by the British M. O. and the Geographical Institute of Bergen for the same epoch are shown on pp. 250 and 251. This new practice is now becoming widely adopted. Three maps issued by the Air Ministry covering the period February 23rd to 25th, 1933, during the great blizzard over the British Isles and part of the Continent are also included. These should prove of interest to those scientifically-minded readers who may have experienced the extreme discomfort and inconvenience caused by this abnormal behaviour of the weather. It is perhaps some consolation to realize

that one's misfortunes—if not too serious—have been due to some outstanding performance on the part of the elements for which no parallel can be found in the records of the Meteorological Office.

This little work by one of the most eminent of living meteorologists should appeal not only to the layman but also to the specialist by reason of the freshness of outlook and suggestiveness that one can always expect from Sir Napier Shaw.

B. L. J.

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THE NEW QUERIST. At the Sign of the Three Candles, Fleet Street, Dublin.  
Price: An Irish (or British) Sixpence.

It was a happy thought to present the New Economics (as they are called) in the form chosen by Berkeley, since he was the first to see the problem as most thinking people see it now, not as the organisation of production in the face of scarcity, but on the contrary, as the organisation of consumption in the face of plenty. A strange problem surely! but already familiar to the industrial nations, with their factories standing idle for want of a market, while would-be consumers starve for want of—what? a current token allowing value to their demand, as something more to the point than self-satisfied gold. And a problem soon to be familiar in Ireland, now that we are bent on industrialising ourselves, bent on creating more sellers without a thought for the problem of purchasing-power. So the New Querist is as timely in its subject-matter, as it is appropriate in literary form—and graceful (one might add) in typographical form.

One only regrets that the anonymous author, in following the Douglas school (rightly enough) as to the statement of the problem, did not probe a little deeper for a solution. The popular melodrama, in which the State appears as hero and the Bank as villain, is having too long a run; we seem to have forgotten that the Bank (as creator of distributed centres) was bound hand and foot by the Act of 1884, whereby it was limited to a central note-issue. Inevitably it became the tool of the central State, which is to say, of the town-dweller's foreign investment policy; thus the Bank was debarred from its proper function of exploiting new lands—at home.

The decentralisation (as opposed to the socialisation) of banking is an idea that has hardly occurred to the Douglasite, and so instead of releasing the banker from prison, he proposes to put chains on his legs and another lock on the door; and at the same time abuses the prisoner for not being freer with his money! It was to be hoped that in Ireland, a country which has abstained (up to now) from the orgy of centralisation, and still has a vision of man and the land as more fundamental than the shop and the housewife, the tawdry drama of the socialists might have been hissed off the stage. . . . One will look with interest to the next pamphlet from Mr. O Lochlainn's press; and in the meantime, let us be thankful for the stimulus of the New Querist, with its able reproduction of Berkeley's manner.

F. M.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY. An Outline Plan. Privately Printed. 1934.

From the same anonymous author we have a pamphlet briefly outlining a scheme in which the ideas of Berkeley (and his modern successors) are shown in practical application to the Ireland of today. This scheme is deserving of the highest commendation, for it is one of the very few (out of hundreds published in the last few years) which clearly recognizes, not merely that *more* money is needed in circulation, but that money of a *different kind* is needed, if our economic ills are to be cured instead of aggravated.

Our author makes it quite clear that the issue he proposes will be secured, not on income of the taxpayer (as is the issue of the Central State), but on the capital of the ratepayer. The difference in effect would be enormous, indeed our author himself has yet to grasp how deep and how widespread would be these effects. He has seen that ratepayers' money would be issued against employable labour, whereas taxpayers' money is issued against readymade goods in the shops, but has failed to see the consequence, that the solution of the unemployment problem lies with the rating authority rather than the State. He can only conceive of his New Money as a central issue promoted by the Central State; he is tied in mind to that modern idol and juggernaut, the Central State, whose power it will be the function of the New Money to break. In the same way the Facists have allied themselves with the enemy, and so become hardly distinguishable from Communists.

Has our author ever asked himself the meaning of the fact, the universal fact, that levies on *capital* (known as rates) are made the basis of distributed authority, while levies on *income* (known as taxes) are made the basis of *centralised* authority? Surely a money secured on rateable capital, such as our author himself proposes, can only be issued by the distributed authority levying the rates; and being so issued, surely this New Money can only take the form of a county bank-note, circulating in the county of issue and making a specific demand on its resources.

What would be the creative effect of such a currency, and how a stable balance would be kept between town and country, consumer and producer, import and export, when the local money was circulating together with the central (like Irish and English now): this is a subject too large to enter on here. Reader, think it out for yourself; and be thankful to the author of this pamphlet, who has given to our thoughts a right direction.

F. M.

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THE MAKING OF VERSE: A GUIDE TO ENGLISH METRES. By Robert Swann and Frank Sidgwick. Pp. xvi+160. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd. n.d. (1934). 3s. 6d. net.

I object to the habit which is growing among publishers of leaving the title-page undated and placing the date of first publication on the reverse of the title.

This is a most entertaining little book and, apart from a few matters to which I shall refer, quite sound. Chapter VII, on *Rhyme: Certain difficulties*, is quite



amusing, but why not "rime"? To the list of rimeless words might have been added quite a number! "Silver" is the most noticeable omission. "Wolf" or "gulf" (according to your taste) has a rime in Germanic proper names like Arnulf, Aistulf.

"When Aistulf, Ratchis' brother, took Ravenna,  
And ended the Exarchate of Byzance . . ."

But I suppose proper names are barred. Among words difficult to rime are words of relationship. "Uncle" rimes only to "carbuncle," "father" only to "rather," "cousin" only to "dozen" (if allowed), "mother" only to "brother" and "another." The adjectives of countries, too, are badly supplied with rimes. "Welsh" rimes only to "belch," "French" has very few rimes, not very useful: "blench," "drench," "stench," "wrench," "trench," "tench," "wench"! I can think of no rime for "scarce" (except in Scots!), "parse," "sparse" (except "carse"). "Crocus" rimes only with "hocus-pocus" and "locus," "oakum" only with "locum" (and "Slocum"!).

I now come to my criticisms. Messrs. Swann and Sidgwick assert (p. 107):—

"If an English poet wishes to reproduce in his own speech the metres which, *reading by quantity*, he hears in classical verse, he can do so by substituting stressed syllables where the classical scheme has long ones, unstressed where it has short."

Apart from the qualification that in making this substitution it is only the long syllables *under the ictus* which are usually so treated, I have no fault to find with the statement that English poets can do, and have done, this: but I cavil at the assertion that in doing so they have reproduced the classical metre.

A classical line of verse is built on quantity, granted, but it has also an accentual pattern, variable in most cases. The effect of the line depends not only on the metre (quantitative) but on the clash of accent with ictus. (I refuse to enter upon the controversy as to the nature of this accent).

Since in English (*pace* the quantitative versifiers) all accented syllables are long, all unaccented short, more or less, the quantitative pattern of a classical line can be, with a very close approximation, reproduced by substituting accented syllables for long syllables under the ictus; but the accentual pattern of the line is entirely altered, the clash of accent with ictus being entirely obliterated.

Now I hold that what the ordinary Roman reader heard in verse was not the metre—an artificial Greek importation in Latin never appreciable to the commonalty—but the accentual rhythm of the line. If the double effect (which the scholarly poet intended and heard) of metre and accentual pattern is to be sacrificed, it would therefore be better to sacrifice quantity and not accent.

By keeping the accentual pattern (variable, no doubt) as it was in the classical Latin, we should be maintaining at least the effect which the majority of ordinary Romans obtained from the verse. This is exactly what the mediaeval Latin verse-writers did from the time when quantity as apart from accent was lost in Latin speech entirely and ceased altogether to be known except to scholars.



From about 600 A.D. at least, quantitative verse is a *tour de force*. But I fancy that one of Horace's "fans," if he heard medieval accentual Latin verse read would not detect a difference in kind: he had probably never bothered about the quantitative metre, and he would find the variable accentual pattern (fixed occasionally as in the Sapphic or the second part of the hexameter) maintained. Horace himself and his scholarly fellow-poets and friends would, of course, have missed the niceties of the quantitative metre and of the clash of ictus with accent. (They, and also the "fans," would have been non-plussed, too, perhaps, by the substitution of stress for pitch-accent.) Carducci, in Italian, in his *Odi barbare*, did what the medieval Latin poets did, and what the English poets did not (with very few exceptions) do.

Nothing is said about "caesura" in English except in the alexandrine (p. 76). But no exposition of the English heroic line can be anything but superficial which neglects the presence of a caesura (or diaeresis). The English heroic line is, in the first place, an imitation of the French decasyllabic line, which was (excluding the 55 type, which had no influence on English verse) of three main types, at least originally:—

1. A line stressed on 4 and 10 with epic caesura at 4 (not always present).
2. A line stressed on 6 and 10 (much rarer).
3. A line stressed on 3 or 4 and 10, with break at 4, in which, however, epic caesura was never found (the lyric or dactylic decasyllable).

Italian added its favourite line stressed on 4 or 6 and 10 without caesural break and often with overrunning caesura at 4 or 6.

The English line is a compound of all these (the third French type had very little influence).

It should have been made clear that length of syllables in English depends entirely on the stress. All stressed syllables are long, all unstressed are short. Thus it is absurd to say (p. 12) that "indivisibility" has "seven syllables equally short." It has seven *vowels* all equally short, but that is a different thing. It is untrue to say that (p. 12): "As short syllables are given 'length by position' in the classics, so certain monosyllables in English verse appear to be occasionally 'stressed by position': that is, the stress is imposed by the metre." It would be difficult to accumulate more errors in one sentence! Stress is never imposed by the metre in English. "Position" has nothing to do with metre; it is a matter of prosody. A similar error occurs on p. 33: "Grammatical stress—the stress used in normal speech-rhythm—must sometimes give way to the requirements of metre."

In the section (p. 61) dealing with Fourteeners, mention should have been made of Poulter's measure. But, on the whole, this book will serve its purpose. The examples are well-chosen and often amusing. The exercises are admirable and should interest schoolboys (and girls) in the composition of verse and its comprehension, which is more important. It is emphatically, not a dull book. Chapter XVII is idiotic and should be omitted.

R. B.

## HUMANISTIC QUIETISM.

POEMS. By Thomas McGreevy. (Heinemann. 3s. 6d.).

All poetry, as discriminated from the various paradigms of prosody, is prayer. A poem is poetry and not Meistergesang, Vaudeville, Fragrant Minute, or any of the other collects for the day, in so far as the reader feels it to have been the only way out of the tongue-tied profanity. This canon has one great advantage, that it passes as poetry more than it rejects as mere metre, a great advantage indeed, now that Balnibarism has triumphed. For prayer may be "good" in Dante's sense on any note between and inclusive of the publican's whinge and the pharisee's tarantantara. When the changes are made we have the great publican poems (*Vita Nuova*, *Astrophel and Stella*, *On the death of Laura*, etc.) and the great pharisee poems (Goethe's *Prometheus*, Carducci's *Satan*, and the best of our domestic low church imprecations), to say nothing of their accommodation in a single period such as Milton contrived at the opening of *Paradise Lost*. But it is with neither of these extremes that we have to do here.

To the mind that has raised itself to the grace of humility "founded"—to quote from Mr. McGreevy's *T. S. Eliot*—"not on misanthropy but on hope," prayer is no more (no less) than an act of recognition. A nod, even a wink. The flag dipped in Ave, not hauled down in Miserere. This is the adult mode of prayer syntonic to Mr. McGreevy, the unfailing salute to *his* significant from which the fire is struck and the poem kindled, and kindled to a radiance without counterpart in the work of contemporary poets writing in English, who tend to eschew as understatement anything and everything between brilliance and murk. The equable radiance of—

"But a moment, now, I suppose,  
For a moment I may suppose,  
Gleaming blue,  
Silver blue,  
Gold,  
Rose,  
And the light of the world."  
(*Gloria de Carlos V*).

and of—

"The end of love,  
Love's ultimate good,  
Is the end of love . . . and  
Light . . ."  
(*Seventh Gift of the Holy Ghost*).

Even the long Cab Poem, the darkest, as I believe it to be the least characteristic, in this small volume of shining and intensely personal verse, climbs to its Valhalla, in this blaze of prayer creating its object:—

"Brightness of brightness,  
Towering in the sky  
Over Dublin . . ."

obliterating the squalid elements of civil war,

It is from this nucleus of endopsychic clarity, uttering itself in the prayer that is a spasm of awareness, and from no more casual source, that Mr. McGreevy evolves his poems. This is the energy and integrity of *Giorgionismo*, self-absorption into light; of the rapt Girogionesque elucidations of *Recessional* and *Nocturne*; and of the admirable *Nocturne of the Self-Evident Presence* :—

“ I see alps, ice, stars and white starlight  
In a dry, high silence.”

He has seen it before, he shall see it again. For the intelligent Amiel there is only one landscape.

To know so well what one values is, what one's value is, as not to neglect those occasions (they are few) on which it may be doubled, is not a common faculty; to retain in the acknowledgment of such enrichment the light, calm and finality that composed it is an extremely rare one. I do not know if the first of these can be acquired; I know that the second cannot.

S. B.

\* \* \* \*

HELLO ETERNITY. By Blanaid Salkeld. Elkin Mathews and Marrot, Ltd.

Blanaid Salkeld has that poetic culture which perpetually attracts the fresh and particular, rather than the general and stereotyped word to the expression varying emotion. She has also a spontaneous personalized and discriminating realization of the emotional colouring of life seen from a definitely feminine aspect. A duality formed of these gifts is rare enough to be acclaimed in any connection, and at the present stage of Anglo-Irish literature rare enough to be precious. Indeed, as far as my knowledge of it goes, it is an entirely new flower to appear on that particular roadside, and as such to be cherished—and if it draws the traveller a little aside from the main highway of national tradition may, for that very reason, bring him a peculiar refreshment of wayside scent and bloom. A book so unmistakably and richly woven of the inexplicit stuff of woman's reaction to life, naturally sets sober criticism craving for metaphorical licence. I might compare these poems to slight water-colour sketches. It is not perfection of form we look for or miss in them, but a soft emergence of changing moods brushed lightly in, in freshed coloured words. Here we have, not the attraction of the polished gem, but the natural and fresh allure of swift mood-annotation. Something living and vivid is caught in these lightly-painted sketches and gleams through the careless-seeming mingling of faint-clear hues. Varied threads of vivid individual emotion, kept well and truly kindled in the words glow up delicately to the awareness of the reader—a stormy quest to lavish tenderness on beauty, a wounded but never bitter acknowledging of the ironic cage of life, a passionate humbleness, a suppliant pride under pain—and there is a fragile and distinct coherence in every mood that makes up the variable texture.

Some hint of the book's qualities might curiously enough be conveyed by saying that they are the contrary of the qualities suggested by the misleading

title. This title is a positive invitation to critics to suspect the writer of having fallen into the very snares of feminine expression which she has not merely avoided, but from which her nature renders her immune. The whole charm and beauty of the book lies in the fact that it expresses something universal about womanhood. Its freedom from the shrillness of emancipatory adolescence, enhances its values not only from a feminist, but also, by virtue of time and place, from a national point of view, making it, in its entire unconsciousness of the need for either feminist or national propaganda a valuable piece of true aesthetic propaganda for both causes. But the title *Hello Eternity* strikes a note completely at variance with the sense of ease and completeness we get from the poems. This dialling of infinity, this ostentatious assertion of a modern right to trouble the silent gods and interrupt the chiming spheres with the crude sound of the telephone bell at once suggests the importunate superiority complex of the novice to freedom—the studied impudence of woman long prevented from speaking her mind to Eternity. Having read the book, this is the last thing one can associate with the matter therein. It would be impossible to think of a more incongruous note to strike in announcing these poems. It becomes them as ill as those slang phrases that American film producers are apt to set on the lips of historic empresses and storied queens. Such exaggerated familiarity in approaching the Absolute is out of keeping with the work's natural dignity of both feeling and manner. The bravado smacks of schoolgirl escape from enforced silence and the rules of deportment. It sounds the very contrary of proud and suppliant, it sounds merely "bold and impudent," and by its childish implications not only "cheeks" the gods, but rudely contradicts every gracious line of a maturely poetic piece of work.

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### THREE YOUNG NEW DUBLIN POETS.

THE VALLEY OF THE BELLS. By Irene Haugh. Basil Blackwell. 2s. 6d.

TWENTY POEMS. By Niall Sheridan and Donagh MacDonagh. Privately printed. 2s. 6d.

*Jugend ist Tugend*, the Germans say: youth is virtue—a phrase justly applicable to Art. Early poetry has often a freshness and simplicity that we feel to be more precious than the finished form of experience.

The matter of Irene Haugh's book is important in the deepest sense. Her chief concern is God. One feels it a privilege, in this jesting age, to be admitted into the pious atmosphere of *The Valley of the Bells*.

In spite of a constant resentment against her carelessness of form (too easy, too easy!—she has allowed a few grammatical errors to remain, too)—one must admit that her utterance is spontaneous. She is able to say what she wants, naturally and clearly.

There can be in the world no more suitable language for poetry than English. So supple, unstressed, and colourless. Genius can do what it wills with the English tongue! (Latin words such as "recede," "relaxed," "immune" should be avoided).



Miss Haugh's titles, "Suggested by Ravel's —," "Nocturnes of Chopin," and the like, often seriously detract from the merit of her verses. Art is not made about art. As a painter once said to a model who came to sit to him, all rouged and powdered: "On ne fait pas des peintures sur des peintures."

"Sad Birds" is a beautiful and touching poem, when we remember little actual caged songsters we have seen and pitied—rather than Ravel's "Oiseaux Tristes":—

"We never forget, never, never forget  
The freedom we had, the life, our nest in the trees,  
The rustling woods, the wind, the sun in the fields,  
The rain, and the long, wet grass; the shining leaves  
Hiding us snug within. Oh, joy when the sun  
Came out! Oh, songs we'll never sing again!  
Now we answer each other on two sad notes.

For this we yearn all day and we have no song.  
We pine in this cage. We pine all day long,  
Hung out over this street watching the sky,  
We two sad birds, watching the rest soar by.

When Miss Haugh tries to give a picture of vice, in Puerto del Vino, how simple and ignorant she appears! Which is just what a poet in such case should be.

There is a delicate poem, suggested—by Debussy? Tut! *suggested by the falling snow*:—

"Hesitantly falling without sound,  
Down, down, swiftly down to the ground."

"At Mass on Monday Morning" has been justly praised.

"A cough, a shuffle of feet and the fidgets of a child  
Sounded near and, far up at the altar, the voice of the Priest  
Isolated in the high and sombre sacrifice."

Youth leans towards melancholy. Youth is a burden! There is the true atmosphere of loneliness in Miss Haugh's title-poem:—

"And still, monotonous, far away, a solitary bell.  
Why is it ringing now? There's nobody here to tell."

One would like to see more joy in *The Valley of the Bells*. That was a good definition of joy: "A motion of the soul towards eternity." We must hope Miss Haugh will find joy upon some mountain peak.

Niall Sheridan and Donagh Mac Donagh, two young National University students, have brought out a joint slender volume, of very different texture from Miss Haugh's. These twenty poems do not touch upon religion, though they are written out of a spiritual faith:—

"Ah! child, you could not ever understand  
That there was beauty lovelier than your face,  
More constant than the lure of your white hand,  
Concealed in many a dull unlikely place."

And again :—

“ Marvell and Nashe have too much thought upon  
The creeping wrinkle and the fading cheek  
from Mr. Sheridan. We have from Mr. MacDonagh :

Treasure in Heaven.

Come ! Let us gather what we may of thought,  
To place it in a deep, subconscious cave,  
Our own possessions, and the ones we bought,  
And what we gladly took from those who gave.  
Round it and shape it well, for it must lie,  
Wrapped by the passing years, far from the day,  
Against the hour when we have come to die  
And find that we are first, and always, clay.  
In that revealing hour when pride is nought,  
And all the learning of the world in vain,  
In that deep cavern we can find our thought  
To wrap around our soul against all pain.  
Though all the world can give has passed away,  
We'll not go naked on the Judgment Day.”

The two young poets have exactly the same attitude towards life. Both have a sense of humour. Mr. Sheridan tells how :—

“ In student days our hero had  
No leanings towards Divinity,  
Although he licked a sneering cad  
For libelling the Trinity.”

Mr. Mac Donagh's humour is more caustic. Though they sing of loves sacred and profane, as poets have ever done, they can be modern too. As in Mac Donagh's “ Still Life ” :—

In the duck-egg blue sky  
pictured remains of former visits  
flowed evenly  
through the chimney tops.”

I am sorry not to be able to quote in full. Niall Sheridan's poem, too, is injured by having to curtail it :—

“ Between the streets and the forgotten stars  
The Neon signs, wine-red and honey-yellow,  
Glow without visible means of support.

Along the pavement, arms linked, they walk  
With ill-adjusted pace.  
Her upraised lips besiege with chattering talk  
His shining after-shaving face . . . .

Beside the kerb a crippled beggar limps,  
A worn wife, festooned with snuffling imps,  
Shuffles along,  
Whining an absent-sweetie song.”

Their work will grow more Gaelic—more native—as they dive deeper into themselves. They are very young, and sincere—to a point. To succeed in being truly sincere—does that not require endless experience and experiment?

In the end, what pleased the reviewer best in the little book (and this must be his truest judgment) was the concluding poem by Donagh Mac Donagh:—

*The Mirror.*

“I fill the black mirror,  
My smile and my fair hair,  
I make it dark or bright,  
I am God there.

Only my reflection  
Lives in the well,  
I am the Heaven,  
I am the Hell.

At the bottom of a well  
I am all,  
My world would be chaos  
If I should fall.”

The similarity of their mood is amazing. I cannot resist quoting a beautiful line from an English poet, recently reviewed:—

“From two dead wills one wandering butterfly.”

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CAVIARE TO THE GENERAL.

MORE PRICKS THAN KICKS. By Samuel Beckett. Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.

BROKEN RECORD. By Roy Campbell. Boriswood. 7s. 6d.

DE VRIENDT GOES HOME. By Arnold ZWIG. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

PETER AND PAUL. By J. H. Pollock. Talbot Press. 5s.

THE ROAD TO NOWHERE. By James Walsh. Chambers. 7s. 6d.

There are novels which are likely to be interesting to the many, and novels which are certain to be only of interest to the few. On some such rough and ready principle of selection publishers presumably select the wares they have to offer, On the other hand it is, of course, not nearly as easy as that; and one of the catches is that through the prevalent disease of intellectual snobbery books which seem only interesting to the few become stamped on that account with a value of their own. And when I turn to Mr. Beckett's book, I do not mean to imply that here are stories which are of no intrinsic value, but that here are stories which while certainly not likely to achieve any wide circulation are calculated to seduce any publisher who refuses to call himself a Philistine. He would feel that they should be published because their extreme cleverness is so unblushingly highbrow

as to overawe all but the very plain man. The very plain man, of course, turning up some such sentence as :—

“Open upon her concave breast as on a lectern lies Portigliotti’s *Penombre Claustrali*, bound in tawed caul. In her talons earnestly she grasps Sade’s *Hundred Days* and the *Anterotica* of Aliosha G. Brignole-Sale, unopened, bound in shagreened caul. A septic pudding hoodwinks her, a stodgy turban of pain it laps her horse face. The eyehole is clogged with the bulbous, the round pale globe goggles exposed . . .”

will close the book promptly, suspecting acute cleverness. And he will, needless to say, be right. Mr. Beckett is an extremely clever young man, and he knows his *Ulysses* as a Scotch Presbyterian knows his Bible.

The ten stories are episodes centring round a Dubliner, Belacque, more akin to Bloom than to Dedalus, but, unlike Bloom, completely stuffed and upholstered in self-consciousness. The best episode, since it is informed by some faintly human appetite, is the account of Belacque’s search for the perfect piece of cheese, to match the toast he has made for himself and the lobster which has been ordered. Here certainly is something of the meticulous intensity in personal ordinances of the introvert, Bloom. And Mr. Beckett has also a gift for the strange and arresting phrase. A book that glitters and will make holiday for the highbrows. Those who are not highbrows must also admire that glitter even if they should also remember a certain proverb, and Mr. Roy Campbell’s verse *On Some South African Novelists*.

Mr. Roy Campbell himself has now given us a portion of his biography since, as he explains, he is not scoundrel enough to write a novel. A large portion concerns fishing, shooting and hunting in South Africa, and various hardy exploits elsewhere. The following is a characteristic passage :—

“It is only lately, following a slight *cogida* in the bull-ring, that the X-rays confirmed what I had so loudly stated before. I had had a broken neck for twelve years, during which time I have thrown steers in rodeos and jousted three years running for Martigues, and been *cogido* four times in the bull-ring—one by Lescot’s famous 128, who tossed me twice before I touched the ground. I should think this is a pretty good record for a man who has cracked his spine.

Actually, however, Mr. Campbell is too much of an individual and rebel to belong to any brand of hearty school, though this book would have been a better one if his voice were less loud, and did not carry a suggestion of self-righteousness and crossness. However, in the later part he has some very sound things to say concerning the clinical aspects of life in modern Europe, and one is left with the impression that while this is neither a very good nor a very interesting book, being carelessly and quickly flung together, the man who has written it is being himself and no other person. And that nowadays when our literature is obsessed with literature and echoes is something.

We all know that Palestine has its Jewish problems no less than Germany, but until reading this book by the author of *The Case of Sergeant Grischa* we are not likely to realise how far Jerusalem is from being a happy home for the exiles of Israel.



It is not apparently only the Arabs and the question of the Wailing Wall which makes it difficult for the British to act as umpire: Modern Zionism has its enemies within the gates, and the hero of this novel, De Vriendt, is the spokesman of the orthodox Jew who would rather make terms with the Arab than submit to the secularisation of Jewry. De Vriendt, who is also a poet and a sexual pervert, is murdered by one of his own race, and the consequences and repercussions make a story so packed with dark intrigue that it is a very bewildering page of modern history. Mr. Zweig combines discursiveness with passion, but he does not make the crooked plain.

*Peter and Paul* belongs to a very different school of fiction. It is an old-fashioned story of two brothers, twins, who look alike but who have different temperaments. Peter is the more dashing; Paul the more reflective—characteristically such temperamental differences are treated at grave length. One goes to the National University, the other to Trinity; both fall in love with the same girl. Though the girl is Peter's discovery, she eventually favours Paul. But then the war intervenes and Paul is believed to be dead, so that when he arrives back in Ireland he finds her married to Peter. The end is that Paul, being mistaken for his brother, is taken for a ride to the Dublin Mountains and shot at dawn. This stilted plot, however, winds its course with a certain quiet sincerity which gives the book some distinction.

But Mr. Maurice Walsh's yarn is perhaps the only book on this list which is likely to commend itself to a large public. It is a Jeffrey Farnol romance, but without Mr. Farnol's irritating pseudo-historical mannerisms of dialogue. The hero is lean and dark, and at one time a football champion; he has a grudge to vindicate, and of course it is vindicated; he joins up with tinkers and roams the length and breadth of Ireland, and there is much fighting, drinking and displays of chivalry towards beautiful women. But besides knowing how to hold our attention with a good story, Mr. Walsh can write, and under his pen the heather and the open road come vividly alive to our senses.

N. H.

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GENTLEMEN, I ADDRESS YOU PRIVATELY. By Kay Boyle. Faber & Faber. 8s. 6d. net.

THE CHILD MANUELA. By Christa Winsloe. English Translation by Agnes Neill Scott. Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d. net.

Kay Boyle writes of life as a mainly physical affair, in a style which displays much sensuous perception. Her troupe of sub-human exotics pursue their elementary existence in the Normandy countryside between Dieppe and Le Havre, indistinguishable except by perversity from the animals with which they are surrounded. She is the type of writer like T. F. Powys or Hemingway that the reader either swallows whole, or lays down in antagonism and disgust, according to his temperament and prejudices. Like theirs, her vision of life is completely original and within its circumscribed limits, harmonious. There are flashes of poetic beauty in her descriptions of the agricultural life of northern France, and she will often in a single phrase convey most skilfully the flavour of a man's

or woman's personality. Here is her chief character, for example :—"For the taste he had for life, everything else could be condoned. He was such a *man*, thought Munday . . . strong and wilful and gleeful, the way everyone wanted a man to be." Like Lawrence and Hemingway, whose attitude she largely shares, this writer cannot resist describing with gusto the most revolting cruelties of the nature-red-in-tooth-and-claw variety. Her book is neither for the squeamish nor the puritanical, but to those interested in the present phase of the development of the novel is a very typical example of left-wing modern fiction.

*The Child Manuela* is the novel from which the film "*Mädchen in Uniform*" and the play of the same name were adapted. The film and play deal with the adolescence of Manuela von Meinhardis; the novel relates the story of her childhood before she entered the pitiless militaristic school so ably presented in the film. It is the tragic history of an ultra-sensitive nature whom misfortune and the senseless stupidity of other human beings drove to suicide. Christa Winsloe has a Proustian gift for describing the significance of small events in a child's life, and writes of the young with sympathy and comprehension, in a simple and unassuming style. It so often happens that works of literary value are massacred when filmed, that it is a pleasant change to find that one of the most beautiful and moving films ever shown, springs from a book which though it is in no way a great novel, possesses at least distinction of feeling and of style. The translation is smooth and unpretentious.

M. G.

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**BLOODY MARY'S.** By Geoffrey Dennis. London : William Heinemann. Ltd., 7s. 6d. net.

*Bloody Mary's* is a man's intimate and vivid recollection and reconstruction of his school days. ("Bloody Mary's" is a grammar school in England, founded by Queen Mary in 1555. Hence the title). The author seems to remember everything, even the most trivial details about the incidents of his school life, and the passing psychological reflexes with his companions. There is a gossipy touch about the author that I do not quite like. But there is a phase of his personality that reveals itself in the region of the uncanny, that is haunting and convincing in its appeal. I like *Bloody Mary's* for the revelation of the author's uncanny instincts. I dislike it for its triviality and its nosing instinct to pry.

His remarks about the Irish boys, or boys of Irish extraction, who happened to be at the school are curious. Page 157—"Haddo knew . . . all about Ireland also; Haddo was half Irish, he told us proudly. About fairies, witches, spells, corpses, ghosts, gods, midnight shipwrecks off the wild coast of Donegal, noonday eagles on desolate Achill Island. Haddo didn't talk much; when he did begin, we never interrupted. He went on, in his best Irish moods, as one inspired. He had seen a dead man walk, get up from his deathbed and go out of the house to join the fairies." This seems a very fair make-up of clippings from English newspapers. Another sentence embodies very characteristically the average Englishman's conception of an Irish Catholic. Page 219—"Popish Jimmy O'Neill, mother's cry-baby, feckless, Irish and handsome, liar, idler, truant,

Papist." This sentence shows the author's facility in descriptive vocabulary which is evident everywhere in the book, as for instance his description of the contents of a penny-in-the-slot machine—"aqueous butterscotch . . . flat exiguous tablets of gritty, flinty, chalky pseudo-chocolate."

On page 225 there is a slight anachronism. The poet of the school, called Patmore Swinburne, because he was related to both poets, scores a debating point with the author. They are discussing the proposition that to be a great poet one must be a good man too. The author cites Longfellow, Wordsworth. And Patmore Swinburne counters, "Wordsworth had an illegitimate child." My point is that this conversation occurs in the chronology of the story round about the year 1900, when it was not likely that any schoolboy would know this story about Wordsworth, even if it had been made public, which I doubt.

\* \* \* \*

THELMA SVANE. By Flora Sandström. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.

The scene of Flora Sandström's novel *Thelma Svane* is the village of Justerhamm. Its heroine, who gives her name to the story, is a beauty, the descendant of a woman whose beauty has become a legend. She marries for love a man of lower social standing than her own. His mother, who lives with the young couple, is from the beginning jealous of her beautiful daughter-in-law and inclined to credit her with supernatural powers. Finally the old woman becomes crazed with superstition and jealousy, and the story ends in tragedy.

Miss Sandström is a born story-teller. She has an amazing facility. In an effortless way, she introduces new characters and invests them with interest from the moment they appear on the scene. So, one-third of the way through the story, we meet Oscar Metfield, who in his youth emigrated to America and returns in middle age with the desire to awaken the simple country folk by means of a superb cinema, and who is the most vivid male character in the story. He is indeed one of the two best characters in the book, the other being the crazy old woman. Thelma herself and her husband belong rather to fiction than to reality. What makes the book so readable is the author's gift for story-telling, combined with the fact that the story has form, the drama is well worked out, and the author leaves no loose ends; also Miss Sandstrom has a gift for vigorous and colourful language, an inherent feeling for the beauty and descriptiveness of words. Inherent, for obviously (one would say) she does not write laboriously nor polish her sentences over. To take a few sentences more or less at random—the scene is the close of a village dance—"a little wind was blowing chill from the pine woods . . . They brooded beyond, a dark silent mass parted here and there by long silver-green fingers of sky. Across the meadow little Oscar Berne was crying of tiredness. Pale clumps of mushrooms and toadstools swam milkily in the waning light, and the white caps of the women had become dim fluttering birds." The last sentence is descriptive writing turned passionate to the point of poetry.

E. G. K.



MOSCOW EXCURSION. By P. T. London: Gerald Howe. 5s. net.

Here we have no cold detached account, no chapter by a Cambridge specialist; we have history after the manner of Gibbon or Carlyle, the book a mere bunch of personal reactions, and in its prejudices quite as shameless as those two! Live history, that's what *Moscow Excursion* is! Perhaps its chief value lies in the view it gives, not of Russian aspirations for the future, but of English satisfaction in the past. From *Moscow Excursion* we may learn as in a mirror just what we of Western Europe most value in our heritage, what liberties, what comforts and what glories. 'Tis an account of you and me, Reader: more important people surely than Ivan Ivanov!

We are revealed as taking special pride in our shops, bringing within our reach (as they do) all the products of all the climates of the Earth; and further we glory (though not quite so openly) in our system of unearned rents, which enables a large number of us (all the best, in fact) to enjoy those benefits without payment of any sort—beyond the effort of dipping in a pocket automatically refilled.

As to the Outer Barbarians, meaning those nations who have not been received into the System, or who have been so mad as to reject its blessings, nations to whom lemons (for example) may not be always available, naturally we pity them, and naturally assume that they are ready to sit up and beg, if we will but shake a branch of our lemon-grove—second department straight through on the right, Madam.

But our mood is not wholly one of triumph; in things that don't matter (and thank God we know the difference!) we exhibit a becoming humility, indeed almost glory in grovelling. Take, for instance, the field of Art—we are always ready to admit that the Barbarian has theatres, beside which our best are no better than penny gaffs. . . . "You should see how Hamlet's done in Moscow!" Now is there a reader will doubt the superiority of that production, or one who will grudge it to the Barbarian?

A revealing book truly, this *Moscow Excursion*! But remember (if we seem to grow witty at the expense of our Tourist) all that Gibbon brought home from his Medieval Excursion was a picture of the Eighteenth Century, whose scale of values he kept hung up over his desk, and by it judged the Christian attempt at re-valuation. As in that case, so in this, the result is live history; and *Moscow Excursion* has the advantage of being short.

Read it and you will read again, if only for its pleasant homely wit—heavenly sometimes when it breaks into that lyric note, lighting up the drear Soviet waste, and seeming to tell everything where nothing is told. . . . Perhaps, after all, the best book on Russia yet!

F. M.

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PEAKS AND PLAINS OF CENTRAL ASIA. By Colonel Reginald C. F. Schomberg. London: Martin Hopkinson. 15s. net.

During a space of nearly four years Colonel Schomberg has traversed a large portion of Chinese Central Asia, that immense tract of little explored country



which lies to the north of India beyond the Himalaya and the Karakoram Mountains. He saw much and unlike a number of explorers is content to describe the country and its peoples without worrying the reader too much about the discomforts and hardships he encountered. The usual mode of travel was on horseback, and supplies for the beasts were carried by donkeys who laden with grain had an unpleasant habit of collapsing whenever a stream had to be crossed. Unless assisted at once they would lie there placidly and suffer themselves to be drowned without making any effort to save themselves. When one considers the usual fate of donkeys the world over this does not seem wholly unreasonable. The author was pleased with what he saw and his description of the amenities of the country might well reconcile one to a life there were it not for the appalling filth of the towns and roads. The scenery is generally fine "lofty mountains, with dense forests and with wonderful pastures; arid deserts; smiling cultivation with orchards of peaches, nectarines and other fruit, and with melons of a flavour like the nectar of the gods. Large lakes abound." This is the country where the labours of Sven Hedin and Sir Aurel Stein have been so richly rewarded. The wholesale removal of paintings, art treasures and carvings by these scientific raiders is completely justified by the author's account of the wholesale vandalism of the Mohammedans who have defaced and destroyed wonderful frescoes and statues in caves formerly used by the Buddhists, fanatical Turks were the sinners in this case.

A number of quaint characters lend life and variety to this charming work, for instance the Amban of Aqsu who entertained the author to dinner and regaled him the while with accounts of dragons, their habits and dispositions, their liking for descending suddenly on carpets, and other unusual propensities possessed by them. Lest one should be inclined to scoff it is scarce more than a couple of centuries since the learned Kircher fled in affright from an Alpine cavern from which issued sounds which convinced him that dragons dwelt therein, or a grave burgher of Switzerland swore that one night he clearly perceived a fiery dragon traversing the moonlit sky.

J. M. CHICHESTER.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR,

There is only one point on which I think I can join issue successfully with Miss Helen Waddell. The version of *La Bele Alys* which she chose was doubtless "in eights and fours," as given by Bartsch (II 82). He gives:—

"Main se leva bele Aëliz . . . ."

But Miss Waddell has misquoted his version, thus turning it into seven-syllable verse:—

"Main se leva bele Alys . . . ."

Thereby she has added a new and unauthorised version to the series.

The form Alys (or rather Aliz) belongs to the later heptasyllabic version, current in 1214, and doubtless earlier also, but the rime belongs to the earlier versions in decasyllables or octosyllables. The later versions rime in "a":—

"Bele Aaliz main se leva" (intermediate).

"Bele Aliz mainz se leva" (late).

[I am aware that other versions also exist, such as

"Main se levoit Aaliz . . . ."

"Aaliz main se leva . . . ."

and that the spellings *Aaliz*, *Aalis*, *Aëliz*, *Aëlis* are indifferent, as also the addition or not of the adverbial "s" to *main*].

I was indeed deceived by Miss Waddell's pastiche resembling Audefroï le Bâtard's *Belle Ysabiaus*. I was doubtless led astray by the tags from this poem:—

"Her mouth was cherry red" ... "le vis (face) avoit vermeill come cerise."

"Lady, pray God, I now go over sea" "d'outre mer ai pour vous la voie emprise."

and by the refrain (which may indeed be older).

Miss Waddell asks me to believe that the metre of *De ramis cadunt folia* "is very like that of a *Planctus*, which is admittedly Abelard's." The metre of *De ramis cadunt folia* is, in each stanza, four lines of the type—

x / x || / x || / x x

with two of the type

x / x

[Two lines are exceptional in that the first break is absent, one of them also exceptional in that the stress falls irregularly.]

The only resemblance with any of Abelard's *Planctus* that I can find is the division of the line into three parts. But where Abelard does this he uses longer lines than the octosyllable:—

9 syllable      ad féstas | choréas      | célibes . . . . (P. III).

10 syllable      miseránda | pátris fácta | víctima . . . (P. III).

11 syllable      Quam vídens | et gémens      | páter ánxius. (P. III).

but I know of no case of the divided octosyllable.

As for Count Thibaut, what Miss Waddell says is quite correct. But my quarrel was with the words (p. 270)—“and swore that Master Peter should have his pick of Champagne.”

I yield to no one in my admiration for St. Peter Damien. I regard, *e.g.*, his *Qui est hic qui pulsat ad ostium* as one of the supreme lyrics of the Middle Ages (it is interesting metrically also !). I am sorry that I was misled by the iambic rendering of his trochaic—

“Ad perennis vitae fontem mens sitivit arida . . . ”

I do most emphatically hold that poems should be translated in the metre of the original (where possible), and indeed the one line quoted in the Latin is actually translated in trochaics !

I regret very much if I have in any way distressed Miss Waddell, whose work has done so much to spread an interest in mediaeval Latin poetry. If I reviewed her *Abelard* as I would a monograph, it was because she deserved serious treatment. There is much else I would like to ask her about some of her allusions, not because I question their accuracy, but on account of my own ignorance.

Yours,

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.